



Trump signals no end to shutdown: 'You have to have a wall'

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and JULIET LINDERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A shutdown affecting parts of the federal government appeared no closer to resolution Wednesday, with President Donald Trump and congressional Democrats locked in a hardening standoff over border wall money that threatens to carry over into January. Trump vowed to hold the line, telling reporters as he flew to Iraq that he'll do "whatever it takes" to get money for border security. He declined to say how much he would accept in a deal to end the shutdown, stressing the need for border security.

"You have to have a wall, you have to have protection," he said.

The shutdown started Saturday when funding lapsed for nine Cabinet-level departments and dozens of agencies. Roughly 420,000 workers were deemed essential and are working unpaid, while an additional 380,000 have been furloughed.

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In this January 2006 file photo, the sun rises over Crater Lake, Ore. Access to Crater Lake and other national parks will be limited due to the government shutdown.

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AP Exclusive: Migrant teen tent city staying open into 2019

By **GARANCE BURKE and ANITA SNOW**
Associated Press

The Trump administration said Wednesday it will keep open through early 2019 a tent city in Texas that now holds more than 2,000 migrant teenagers, and also will increase the number of beds at another temporary detention center for children in Florida. The Tornillo facility opened in June in an isolated corner of the Texas desert with capacity for up to 360 children. It eventually grew into a highly guarded detention camp where, on Christmas, some 2,300 largely Central American boys and girls between the ages of 13 and 17 slept in more than 150 canvas tents.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services spokesman Mark Weber said Tornillo, which originally was slated to close Dec. 31, has stopped receiving new referrals of migrant youth. Tornillo will now shut down after the new year, Weber said, but he did not give an exact date or more precise time frame for when it might close for good. The agency is working with its network of shelters including Tornillo to release the children "to suitable sponsors as safely and quickly as possible," he said.

The government also plans to house more teens at another temporary shelter in Homestead, Florida, expanding the total number of beds from 1,350 to 2,350, he added. Tornillo came under fire last month after revelations that the Trump administration had waived

FBI fingerprint checks for the 2,100 staff working there and allowed the private contractor running the facility to have just one mental health clinician for every 100 children. In November, Health and Human Services officials said they hoped the fingerprints would be completed in a month but they haven't given an update.

Lawmakers called for stricter background checks, more mental health support and a public hearing to further investigate problems at Tornillo raised by a federal watchdog report and an Associated Press investigation. The federal program originally intended to offer a safe haven to vulnerable children fleeing danger across the globe has expanded considerably over the last two years. Three months after President Donald Trump took office there were 2,720 migrant youth in government care. Today, the system has 16,000 beds available for migrant children. Confidential government data obtained and cross-checked by AP has shown that as the year draws to a close, about 9,800 detained migrant children are in facilities holding 100-plus total kids, including Tornillo and Homestead. The American Academy of Pediatrics and many experts warn against institutionalizing children in large groups, saying the experience of treating the young migrants like cogs in a big machine can have severe psychological consequences and cause life-long trauma. □



In this Dec. 13, 2018 file photo migrant teens walk in a line through the Tornillo detention camp in Tornillo, Texas.

Associated Press

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Trump signals no end to shutdown: 'You have to have a wall'

Continued from Front

While the White House was talking to congressional Democrats — and staff talks continued on Capitol Hill — negotiations dragged Wednesday, dimming hopes for a swift breakthrough.

With no deal at hand, members of the House were told there would be no votes on Thursday, assuring the shutdown would last yet another day. Lawmakers are away from Washington for the holidays and have been told they will have 24 hours' notice before having to return. The Senate is slated to come into session Thursday afternoon. Rep. Mark Meadows of North Carolina, a Trump ally who has been involved in



A tourist is reflected in a window of the closed building housing the Liberty Bell, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018, in Philadelphia. The building is closed due to the partial government shutdown.

Associated Press

the talks, said the president "is very firm in his resolve that we need to secure our border." He told CNN, "I don't know that there's a lot of progress that has been made today."

But he added of Democrats: "If they believe that this president is going to yield on this particular issue, they're misreading him." The impasse over government funding began last

week, when the Senate approved a bipartisan deal keeping government open into February. That bill provided \$1.3 billion for border security projects but not money for the wall. At Trump's urging, the House approved that package and inserted the \$5.7 billion he had requested.

On Friday afternoon, a Senate procedural vote showed that Republicans lacked the 60 votes they'd need to force the measure with the wall funding through their chamber. That jump-started negotiations between Congress and the White House, but the deadline came and went without a deal.

Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer of New York on Saturday said funding for Trump's wall will "never pass the Senate." "So President Trump, if you want to open the government, you must abandon the wall, plain and simple," Schumer said.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi is in lockstep with Schumer against the wall funding. If the shutdown continues into 2019, she has vowed that her new Democratic majority will act quickly to pass legislation reopening the government.

The shutdown has been playing out against the backdrop of turmoil in the stock market, which is having a roller-coaster week. Kevin Hassett, the chairman of the White House's Council of Economic Advisers, said the shutdown does not change the administration's expectation for strong growth heading into 2019. He told reporters a shutdown of a few weeks is not going to have any "significant effect on the outlook."

The shutdown that began

on Saturday — the third of 2018 — caused a lapse in funding for nine of 15 Cabinet-level departments and dozens of agencies, including the departments of Homeland Security, Transportation, Interior, Agriculture, State and Justice.

Roughly 420,000 workers were deemed essential and were working unpaid, while another 380,000 were furloughed, meaning they'll stay home without pay. The shutdown complicates things for essential employees who planned trips for the holidays: According to the Office of Personnel Management rules, employees deemed essential or otherwise exempted from their respective agency furloughs can't take any vacation or sick days.

Those being furloughed include 52,000 workers at the Internal Revenue Service and nearly everyone at NASA. About 8 in 10 employees of the National Park Service are staying home, and many parks have closed.

Roughly 44,000 U.S. Coast Guard employees are considered essential, and will report to work this week without pay, with another 6,000 furloughed. The Coast Guard is the only arm of the military affected by the shutdown because it is funded through the Department of Homeland Security. The shutdown didn't stop people from visiting the White Sands National Monument in southern New Mexico, where hundreds of unauthorized visitors have in recent days climbed over a fence to enter the monument, according to The Alamogordo Daily News. State highway workers were sent to the area Monday to erect "no parking" signs along U.S. 70 outside the monument. □



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Deaths of 2 children raise doubts about U.S. border agency

By NOMAAN MERCHANT

Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — The deaths of two migrant children in just over two weeks raised strong new doubts Wednesday about the ability of U.S. border authorities to care for the thousands of minors arriving as part of a surge of families trying to enter the country.

An 8-year-old boy identified by Guatemalan officials as Felipe Gomez Alonzo died in U.S. custody at a New Mexico hospital on Christmas Eve after suffering a cough, vomiting and fever, authorities said. The cause is under investigation, as is the death Dec. 8 of another Guatemalan child, 7-year-old Jakelin Caal.

"There is a real failure here that we all need to reckon with," said incoming Rep. Veronica Escobar, a Democrat elected last month to represent El Paso in Congress. "We need to know how many other Jakelins and Felipes there have been."

The U.S. government's system for detaining migrants crossing the border is severely overtaxed. Authorities would not say how many children U.S. Customs and Border Protection is now holding. But the country is seeing a sharp rise in families with children. In the wake of the two deaths, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen asked the Coast Guard to study CBP's medical programs and announced that all children who enter the agency's custody will be given "more thorough" assessments.

Also, border authorities said that they conducted health checks in reaction to Felipe's death on nearly all children in their custody. They did not disclose the results.

Nielsen blamed "a system that prevents parents who bring their children on a dangerous illegal journey from facing consequences for their actions." The Trump administration contends it must detain more people to discourage other Central American families from

trying to enter the country. Felipe had been detained by U.S. border authorities for a week and moved between facilities with his fa-

ther, officials said. The last place the boy was held — after the first of two visits to the hospital on the day he died — was a highway checkpoint in New Mexico. Felipe's father, Agustin Gomez, did not see any signs of illness from his son until Monday, according to Guatemalan consul Oscar Padilla, who spoke to Gomez on Wednesday. Felipe and his father had left Guatemala on Dec. 14 and were detained at the U.S.-Mexico border four days later, Padilla told The Associated Press.

By its own regulations, CBP is supposed to detain people for no more than 72 hours before turning them over to other government agencies responsible for long-term detention. CBP facilities are typically spartan, with food, water and blankets but often no medical professionals, teachers or some of the other resources longer-term detention centers offer.

Similarly, Jakelin was first held with her father at a small base in rural New Mexico that did not have running water, according

to Democrats who visited it after the girl's death. Rep. Henry Cuellar, a Texas Democrat who sits on a key subcommittee overseeing border funding, said he has pushed to fund more alternatives to detention such as ankle monitors, which he said could have been issued to Felipe's father. He said the Trump administration has prioritized the president's border wall — the subject of the partial government shutdown since last week — over investing in CBP checkpoints that have long needed attention.

"They're not set up to hold people for a long time," Cuellar said. "There's so much money that the wall sucks up that it's hard to address some of the other issues. I wish the administration would understand that."

CBP said it is reviewing all available options to relieve overcrowding in the El Paso sector, where Felipe and his father were apprehended. The agency also said it has reached out to other government agencies for "surge medical assistance."

CBP Commissioner Kevin McAleenan said in the agency's defense that CBP has more than 1,500 emer-

gency medical technicians on staff and that officers are taking dozens of sick children to hospitals every day.



In this Jan. 25, 2017, file photo, an agent from the border patrol, observes near the Mexico-US border fence, on the Mexican side, separating the towns of Anapra, Mexico and Sunland Park, N.M.

Associated Press

"This is an extraordinarily rare occurrence," McAleenan told "CBS This Morning" of the two child deaths. "It's been more than a decade since we've had a child pass away anywhere in a CBP process, so this is just devastating for us." It's not uncommon for families in El Paso these days to spend more than a week in holding cells just as Felipe and his father did, said Ruben Garcia, director of El Paso's Annunciation House shelter.

Those problems predate the Trump administration. During a 2014 surge at the border, some families were put in holding cells for up to 20 days before being released, Garcia said.

Homeland Security's inspector general examined nine CBP holding facilities earlier this year. In a September report, the inspector general said that the facilities complied with CBP standards and that people had access to food and water, toilets and sinks, and hygiene items — with "the exception of inconsistent cleanliness of the hold rooms."

Just three of the nine facilities had "trained medical staff to conduct medical screening and provide basic medical care," the report said. And showers were available for unaccompanied children at only four facilities.

Felipe and his father were taken to two of the facilities the inspector general examined: the processing center at the Paso del Norte port of entry, then the El Paso Border Patrol station.

But just after 1 a.m. Sunday, the two were transferred 90 miles (145 kilometers) to the Border Patrol station at Alamogordo, New Mexico. CBP said it moved them "because of capacity levels" in El Paso. The next day, a border agent noticed Felipe was coughing and had "glossy eyes," and sent him to the hospital, the CBP said.

"I can't think of any logical reason that would happen, for the most vulnerable of children to be sent to a remote area," Escobar said. According to CBP statistics, border agents detained 5,283 children unaccompanied by a parent in November alone. Agents last month also apprehended 25,172 "family units," or parents and children together. Both figures are highs for this year.

Children who arrive unaccompanied by a parent are supposed to go to longer-term facilities operated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. But HHS' system is also strained. The Associated Press reported this month that 14,300 children were being detained by HHS, most in facilities with more than 100 kids. □

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FBI concerned by money mules roped into fraud schemes

By **ERIC TUCKER and MICHAEL BALSAMO**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The email caught the executive at a small company by surprise one morning in 2016. The company's owner, or so he thought, was requesting a money transfer to pay for supplies from a new vendor.

It wasn't until that night when the executive, hours after the money had been transferred and still puzzled by the out-of-the-blue demand, texted the owner to make sure he'd heard the request correctly.

The befuddled reply was disheartening: "I just saw your message about a wire transfer today. What is that about?"

It was all part of a fraud scam that targeted companies, schools and non-profits in Connecticut and elsewhere in the United States and that resulted this month in a 45-month prison sentence for one of the culprits. The case is part of a seemingly endless cycle of money laundering schemes that law enforcement officials say they're scrambling to slow through a combination of prosecution and public awareness. Beyond the run-of-the-mill plots, officials say, is a particularly concerning trend involving "money mules" — people who, unwittingly or not, use their own bank accounts to move money for criminals for purposes they think are legitimate or even noble. The "mule" concept has attracted renewed attention with this month's



In this June 14, 2018, file photo, the FBI seal is seen before a news conference at FBI headquarters in Washington.

release of Clint Eastwood's "The Mule," a real-life tale of an elderly horticulturist who smuggled cocaine for a Mexican cartel. But the modern-day mules of most concern to the FBI are people who get themselves entangled in complicated, international money laundering schemes that cause huge economic losses and show no signs of stopping. "They trial and error this stuff and they see what works and they see what doesn't," FBI supervisory special agent James Abbott said in an interview. "It's a much higher success rate when you have a lot of money using somebody else's account going through there instead of trying to cross the border with a physical transportation of cash."

The FBI and international law enforcement agencies have stepped up efforts against the fraud and say they're building bigger cases than before. Europol said this month it had identified 1,504 money mules, arresting 168, in a continent-wide bust. The FBI in June announced the arrests of 74 people, including 29 in Nigeria, for schemes targeting businesses and the elderly, and has launched a publicity campaign called "Don't Be a Mule."

The money mule cases are an offshoot of more generic frauds encountered by the FBI, including schemes that dupe people into thinking they've won the lottery and can claim their prizes by wiring an advance payment, or that trick the unsuspecting into believing

a relative has been arrested and needs urgent bail money or that a supposed paramour they've met online requires cash. In cases like the Connecticut one, fraudsters assume identities of executives and scam employees into wiring cash. That's what happened in 2016 at Beacon Systems, a Texas company where a new employee received emails from someone she thought was the chief executive officer instructing her to transfer nearly \$100,000 for a vendor-related payment.

Several weeks later, Kerry Williams, the CEO whose identity was impersonated, was on her way to the airport when the FBI contacted her and explained how the company had been victimized as part of

a much broader swindle. A dual Nigerian-U.S. citizen was ultimately sentenced to four years in prison in connection with the scheme.

"It makes you kind of paranoid," Williams said, describing how the experience also made the SAP consulting firm more vigilant. "Even to this day, we're overly cautious about everything. I think you kind of go to that extreme."

As for money mules, they're persuaded, sometimes with the incentive of keeping a cut of the funds, into allowing money transfers into their own bank accounts at the direction of a fraudster they may mistake for an online friend or romantic partner, a military officer overseas or an employer. They're then instructed to transfer those funds elsewhere, into accounts controlled by criminals.

In one example, the FBI says, a fraudster posing as an Army captain stationed overseas recruited a man he met online to be a money mule, saying he was making arrangements to travel home and needed the man's help receiving and sending some funds. The FBI says \$10,000 was wired into the man's account. He was then instructed to withdraw it in small increments and send it to a woman in Texas.

The mules are sometimes witting conspirators. Other times, they're elderly, lonely or just confused. The ones the FBI concludes are merely unwitting are given stern warnings but generally avoid prosecution. □



In this photo provided by Colin O'Brady, of Portland, Ore., he speaks on the phone in Antarctica on Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018.

Associated Press

American man first to solo across Antarctica unaided

By AMANDA LEE MYERS
Associated Press

An Oregon man became the first person to traverse Antarctica alone without any assistance on Wednesday, trekking across the polar continent in an epic 54-day journey that was previously deemed impossible. Colin O'Brady, of Portland, finished the bone-chilling, 930-mile (1,500-kilometer) journey as friends, family and fans tracked the endurance athlete's progress in real time online.

"It was an emotional call," she said. "He seemed overwhelmed by love and gratitude, and he really wanted to say 'Thank you' to all of us."

O'Brady was sleeping near the finish line in Antarctica late Wednesday and could not immediately be reached for comment.

The 33-year-old O'Brady documented his nearly entirely uphill journey — which he called The Impossible First — on his Instagram page. He wrote Wednesday that he covered the last roughly 80 miles (129 kilometers) in one big, impromptu final push to the finish line that took well over an entire day.

"While the last 32 hours were some of the most challenging hours of my life, they have quite honestly been some of the best moments I have ever experienced," O'Brady posted.

The day before, he posted that he was "in the zone" and thought he could make it to the end in one go.

"I'm listening to my body and taking care of the details to keep myself safe," he wrote. "I called home and talked to my mom, sister and wife — I promised them I will stop when I need to."

Though others have traversed Antarctica, they either had assistance with reinforced supplies or kites that helped propel them forward.

In 2016, British explorer Henry Worsley died attempting an unassisted solo trip across Antarctica, collapsing from exhaustion toward the end of the trek. Worsley's friend and fellow English adventurer Louis Rudd is currently attempting an unaided solo in Worsley's honor and was competing against O'Brady to be the first to do it.

Besaw said O'Brady plans to stay on Antarctica until Rudd finishes his trek, hopefully in the next few days.

"It's a small club," she joked. "His intention is to wait for Louis and have kind of a celebratory moment with the only other person on the planet to have accomplished this same thing."

O'Brady described in detail the ups and downs along the way since he began

the trek on Nov. 3. He had to haul 375 pounds (170 kilograms) of gear largely uphill and over sastrugi, wave-like ridges created by wind.

"Not only am I pulling my ... sled all day, but I'm pulling it up and over thousands of these sastrugi speed bumps created by the violent wind," he wrote in an Instagram post on Nov. 12. "It's a frustrating process at times to say the least."

On Nov. 18, he wrote that he awoke to find his sled completely buried from an all-night blasting of wind and snow. That day he battled a 30 mph (48 kph) headwind for eight hours as he trudged along.

"There were several times I considered stopping, putting my tent back up and calling it a day," he wrote. "I wanted so badly to quit today as I was feeling exhausted and alone, but remembering all of the positivity that so many people have been sending, I took a deep breath and focused on maintaining forward progress one step at a time and managed to finish a full day."

Though O'Brady had initially thought he'd want a cheeseburger at the end of his nearly impossible journey, Besaw said her husband has been fantasizing about fresh fish and salad, since he's mostly been eating freeze-dried foods. □

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ACLU sues government to learn about NSA call records program

By LARRY NEUMEISTER
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A civil rights group has sued the U.S. government, saying it needs more information about surveillance of Americans' phone and financial records to guide the public debate over what will happen when the law that regulates the scrutiny expires next year.

The American Civil Liberties Union sued the National Security Agency, the director of national intelligence, the CIA and the Justice Department on Friday in Manhattan federal court, seeking information about a program that collects records during investigations into terrorism or clandestine intelligence activities.

According to the lawsuit, the government has not responded to requests made last month for information about its surveillance of Americans under a 2015 law. Congress used the law to set boundaries on the NSA's bulk collection of call records and other data after former NSA contractor Edward Snowden leaked documents revealing extensive government surveillance.

The law requires annual reports to Congress from the intelligence community and forces the government to seek a court order to collect call records to obtain intelligence. Requests of records of U.S. citizens for investigations cannot be based solely on activities protected by the First Amendment.

A government spokesman declined comment.

The limits on the surveillance are due to expire in 2019, and the ACLU says more information is needed for a healthy debate before the law is reauthorized or changes are made. The group said the failure of the government to release any relevant records since the submission of its Freedom of Information Act request last month is concerning because the request "relates to sweeping surveillance activities that implicate core privacy and free speech rights of Americans," according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit, the ACLU added, is necessary because the public lacks adequate information about how the government collects vast numbers of Americans' communications records, financial records and other data without a warrant. It said the law was meant to curtail unnecessary surveillance, but data collection continues to occur on an immense scale. For instance, the lawsuit noted, the government said it collected over 534 million call detail records in 2017 even though it reported having only 40 surveillance targets. □

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Quake from Mount Etna volcano jolts Sicily, sparks panic

By **FRANCES D'EMILIO**,
Associated Press

ROME (AP) — An earthquake triggered by Mount Etna's eruption jolted eastern Sicily before dawn Wednesday, injuring at least 10 people, damaging churches and houses on the volcano's slopes and prompting panicked villagers to flee their homes.

Italy's Civil Protection officials said the quake, which struck at 3:19 a.m., was part of a swarm of some 1,000 tremors, most of them barely perceptible, linked to Etna's volcanic eruption this week.

Italy's national seismology institute said the quake had a magnitude of 4.8 on the open-ended Richter scale and 4.9 on the moment magnitude scale, which relates to the amount the ground slips. It struck north of Catania, the largest city in the eastern part of the Mediterranean island, but



Italian Civil protection volunteers gather near the heavily damaged church of Maria Santissima as plumes of smoke come out the Mount Etna Volcano in Fleri, Sicily Italy, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018.

no damage or injuries were reported there.

The quake opened up cracks in homes in several towns, sending chunks of concrete debris tumbling to the ground. It toppled a Madonna statue in a church in Santa Venerina and broke up sidewalks and a stretch of highway,

forcing it to close. Many people spent the hours after the quake sleeping in their cars.

In the town of Piano d'Api, firefighters removed cracked stucco from the bell tower of the damaged Santa Maria della Misericordia church. Italy's culture ministry said the quake

damage to churches was being tallied by experts.

"Etna remains a dangerous volcano, and this country of ours is unfortunately fragile," government undersecretary Vito Crimi said as he reported 10 people injured. The most seriously injured was a 70-year-old man who fractured ribs and was undergoing surgery for chest injuries. A 71-year-old patient was being kept in hospital for observation, while others were treated and released, the Italian news agency ANSA reported. Additionally, 18 other people went to local hospitals suffering from panic attacks or shock, news reports said.

One 80-year-old man was safely extracted from the rubble of his home, ANSA said, while a woman told state radio that her sister was pulled out from under a heavy armoire that had toppled. A ceiling col-

lapsed in another house, and in other homes parts of exterior walls crumbled. Some stone walls along fields and local roads crumbled. Etna, the largest of Italy's three active volcanoes, has been particularly active since July. In recent days, Etna's latest eruption has been shooting volcanic ash, heavy smoke and lava stones into the air, coating roads and homes nearby with ash. A new fracture has opened near Etna's southeast crater and lava has been flowing down an uninhabited slope.

The quake was also felt in the upscale Sicilian resort town of Taormina and in other towns in eastern Sicily. The Civil Protection agency said temporary shelters were being set up in gyms or municipal buildings for people whose houses were damaged or who were too frightened to return to their homes. □

18 arrested in Tunisia amid violent protests

Associated Press

TUNIS, Tunisia (AP) — Tunisian authorities have arrested 18 people during protests that erupted after the death of a journalist who set himself on fire to protest economic problems in the North African nation, officials said Wednesday.

Thirteen were arrested in the provincial city of Kasserine and five others in Tebourba, near Tunis, Interior Ministry spokesman Sofiane Zaag said.

Clashes between protesters and Tunisian authorities took place in several



Tunisian Police officers patrol after clashes in the streets of Kasserine, southern of Tunisia, Tuesday, Dec 25, 2018.

regions over the past two days after journalist Abderrazak Zergui posted a video online before his

self-immolation in Kasserine describing his desperation and calling for revolt. He expressed frustration at unemployment and the unfulfilled promises of Tunisia's 2011 Arab Spring revolution.

The most violent protests took place in Kasserine, in west central Tunisia, where police used tear gas to disperse stone-throwing demonstrators. According to ShemsFM radio, the military was deployed to help police tackle the protests and secure state buildings.

Meanwhile, Kasserine tri-

bunal spokesman Achref Youssefi said an investigation "for failure to assist a person in danger" has been opened following the death of Zergui. He said a suspect has been arrested. A similar self-immolation, by a street vendor lamenting unemployment, corruption and repression, led to nationwide protests fueled by social media that brought down Tunisia's long-time authoritarian president in 2011. That ushered in democracy for Tunisia and unleashed similar movements around the Arab world. □



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Pakistan's journalists complain of increasing censorship

By KATHY GANNON
Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistani journalists, who have taken on military dictators and been beaten and jailed in the pursuit of a free press, say they now face a form of censorship that is more subtle but no less chilling, one spearheaded by the security services.

Journalists and press freedom advocates say the military and the powerful Inter-Services Intelligence agency, or ISI, are pressuring media outlets to quash critical coverage. The newly elected government is meanwhile slashing its advertising budget, squeezing a key source of revenue for private newspapers and TV stations.

Ghazi Salauddin, a veteran Pakistani journalist who has witnessed successive periods of direct military rule, said today's censorship is the worst it's ever been.

"Today we don't know what will annoy them," he said of the military. "Today we have to do self-censorship and that is the worst kind of censorship, because it is done out of fear."

Websites have been shut down, including the Urdu website of the U.S. government-funded Voice of America, after it reported on a tribal movement critical of military operations in regions bordering Afghanistan. Mashaal Radio, affiliated with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, has also been shut down.

Journalist Cyril Almeida was charged with treason after he published an interview with Nawaz Sharif in which the former prime minister accused the Pakistani military of aiding the militants who carried out the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

Authorities are also targeting social media, asking Twitter to suspend accounts and submitting thousands

with a facade of a democratically elected government."

New legislation regulating

establishment at their will," Chaudhry told The Associated Press.

"Incitement of hatred is

threaten the state, allegations denied by the government.

Dawar said newspapers have refused to carry their statements or cover their press conferences.

Chaudhry said coverage of PTM is restricted because "we have fought a war in that area."

"The population is in process of settling down, (and a) narrative that creates hatred cannot be allowed," he said.

Steven Butler, Asia program coordinator for the Committee to Protect Journalists, said Pakistan has waged an "aggressive crackdown" on the media. "The crackdown comes behind the scenes and is increasingly exerted through the owners of media properties," he said.

There are currently 89 private television channels licensed by the government. Most of the privately-owned channels emerged in just the last 15 years and are owned by big businesses, said Mohammad Ziauddin of the Pakistan Press Foundation, a free press advocacy group.

"The new entrants in the media are business people. They got into the media industry not to make money, not to serve the public, but to have clout," he said, making them vulnerable to intimidation and financial coercion.

In the last two months, hundreds of journalists have been laid off as government advertising — a key source of revenue — has been drastically reduced. A rate schedule seen by the AP shows the government was until recently paying upward of \$2,500 for a 60-second spot, which has now been reduced to \$400 to \$500. □



In this Thursday Dec. 20, 2018 photo, jobless newspaper workers protest near the Parliament, in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Associated Press

of requests to Facebook to take down pages for a variety of reasons, ranging from criticism of the military to propagating hate and insulting Islam.

Taha Siddiqui, an opinion writer and journalist who is critical of the security services, lives in self-imposed exile in France after an attempt on his life earlier this year, which he blamed on the ISI. He said Twitter suspended his account twice in 72 hours, telling him it was because of "objectionable content that was in violation of Pakistani law," without elaborating.

Journalist Matiullah Jan, labeled "anti-state" by the military for his criticism of the judiciary and army, called the crackdown "a systematic attempt by the military and its intelligence agency to assert control

print and online media has also alarmed press freedom advocates, who fear it will grant authorities even more censorship tools.

Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry denies the government is cracking down on press freedoms, saying it only acts to prevent incitement to violence. Pakistan has banned coverage of the hard-line Tehreek-e-Labbaik movement after it held violent protests and threatened to kill a Christian woman who was acquitted of blasphemy charges after years spent on death row. Blasphemy is punishable by death in Pakistan, and the mere accusation can spark deadly mob violence.

"Pakistan has the freest media possible, and powerful media criticize the government and even agencies and (the) army

the only area that we interfere."

But journalists say the interference goes much further, and has worsened since July's national elections. They say intelligence agents have called reporters to demand that opinion pieces be withdrawn and to quash investigative reports on allegations that the military intervened in the vote to help elect Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The security establishment is especially sensitive about coverage of the Pashtun Tahafaz (Protection) Movement, or PTM, which has criticized the military's actions in the tribal regions. Pakistan has long been accused of covertly supporting the Afghan Taliban while waging a scorched-earth campaign against homegrown extremists who

Egypt's 2 ex-presidents appear in the same courtroom

By **SAMY MAGDY**
Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Two former Egyptian presidents appeared Wednesday in the same Cairo courtroom, with Hosni Mubarak testifying in a retrial of Mohamed Morsi on charges related to prison breaks at the height of the 2011 uprising that toppled Mubarak. The 90-year-old Mubarak, whose nearly three-decade rule was ended by a popular uprising in 2011, entered the courtroom with his two sons Alaa and Gamal. He carried a cane and wore a dark blue suit and matching tie. He appeared physically well and mentally sharp though his speech was slow at times. Chief Judge Mohammed Sherin allowed Mubarak to take a seat while testifying. The hearing took place amid heavy security in a police facility in a southern Cairo suburb. Morsi, 67, and the Muslim Brotherhood swiftly rose to power in elections after Mubarak's ouster, only to find themselves imprisoned a year later when millions protested against them for abuse of power, leading the military to overthrow



Former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, center, arrives with his sons Alaa, left, and Gamal, right, to testify, in a courtroom at the National Police Academy in Cairo, Egypt, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018.

the government. The jailed former leader is involved in four lengthy trials in different cases, including on charges of undermining national security by conspiring with foreign groups and orchestrating a prison break. Wednesday's case is rooted in the 2011 escape of more than 20,000 inmates from Egyptian prisons -- including Morsi and other Muslim Brotherhood members -- during the early days of the 18-day uprising against Mubarak. Morsi

and the other Brotherhood leaders escaped two days after they were detained as Mubarak's security forces tried to undercut the planned protests. At the time, authorities also cut off internet access and mobile phone networks, crippling communication among the protesters and with the outside world. In June 2015, the Cairo Criminal Court issued sentences of death and life imprisonment against Morsi and other key figures in the Brotherhood. However, in

November 2016, the Court of Cassation, Egypt's final recourse for appeals in criminal cases, annulled the sentence and ordered a retrial of the defendants. During two hours of testimony, Mubarak said Wednesday that former spy chief and vice president Omar Suleiman told him on Jan. 29, 2011, that at least 800 armed people crossed into the northern part of Sinai Peninsula, through tunnels from Gaza with help from the Muslim Brotherhood. "They entered Egypt through Gaza and had weapons. ... They headed toward the prisons to release prisoners belonging to Hezbollah, Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood," Mubarak said, referring to Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group and Hamas militants who have ruled Gaza since 2007. Mubarak refused to answer most questions, saying he needs permission from the military and President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, who led the military's 2013 ouster of Morsi, Egypt's first freely elected president. El-Sissi has since overseen a massive crackdown on Morsi's supporters, jailing thou-

sands of them along with secular activists behind the 2011 uprising. "If I talk, I will open many subjects that I am barred from discussing without permission," the former president said. Mubarak was freed last year, ending nearly six years of legal proceedings against him. He was acquitted by the country's top appeals court of charges that he ordered the killing of protesters during the 2011 uprising. Mubarak has already served a three-year sentence for embezzling state funds in connection with the protesters' case. Morsi, who wore a blue jumpsuit, did not make use of the opportunity offered to defendants to question Mubarak. Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohammed el-Beltagi, a defendant in the case, questioned Mubarak but was sentenced to two years in prison for insulting the judiciary after the chief judge said el-Beltagi ridiculed the court's decision to stop him from asking more questions. The chief judge adjourned the hearings until Jan. 24. □

Russia: Israeli strike on Syria threatened civilian flights

By **NATALIYA VASILYEVA**
Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — The Russian military on Wednesday criticized an alleged Israeli airstrike near the Syrian capital, saying it has endangered civilian flights. Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said that six Israeli F-16 jets launched a "provocative" raid at the moment when two civilian airliners were preparing to land in Damascus and Beirut, creating a "direct threat" to the aircraft. Lebanon's acting Transport Minister Youssef Fenianos later on Wednesday confirmed Konashenkov's account, saying the two airplanes in Lebanese airspace "narrowly" escaped Israeli warplanes, averting a "human catastrophe."



Israeli Air Force acrobatic team flies during a graduation ceremony for new pilots in Hatserim air force base near the southern Israeli city of Beersheba, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018.

Associated Press

Fenianos didn't provide details, but said he reported the incident to the prime minister-designate. He said the Lebanese government will present a complaint to the U.N. Security Council.

The Syrian military didn't fully engage its air defense assets to avoid accidentally hitting the passenger jets, Konashenkov said. He added that Syrian air traffic controllers redirected the

Damascus-bound plane to the Russian air base in Hmeimeem in Syria's coastal province of Latakia. Konashenkov said the Syrian air defense forces shot down 14 of the 16 precision-guided bombs dropped by the Israeli jets, while the remaining two hit a Syrian military depot 7 kilometers (about 4.3 miles) west of Damascus, injuring three Syrian soldiers. It wasn't clear if the Syrian military used any of the advanced S-300 air defense missile systems that Russia delivered in October to beef up its air defenses. The move followed the Sept. 17 downing of a Russian reconnaissance plane by Syrian forces responding to an Israeli air raid, an incident that strained previously warm ties between Russia

and Israel. The Syrian Foreign Ministry in a statement Wednesday accused Israel of exacerbating the crisis in the country and standing in the way of the government's war on terrorism. In messages sent to the U.N. secretary-general and the president of the Security Council, the ministry said the Israeli airstrike wouldn't have been launched if it wasn't for what it called "unlimited" U.S. support for Israel. Israel has carried out dozens of airstrikes in Syria, most of them believed to have been aimed at Iranian arms shipments to the Hezbollah militant group. Both Iran and Hezbollah have been fighting alongside the forces of Syrian President Bashar Assad. □



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Prominent Chinese rights lawyer tried in closed proceedings

By **DAKE KANG**
YANAN WANG
Associated Press

TIANJIN, China (AP) — The trial of a prominent human rights lawyer began in northern China on Wednesday with about two dozen plainclothes officers stationed outside a courthouse and at least one supporter taken away by police.

Reporters, foreign diplomats and supporters were prevented from approaching the municipal court in Tianjin city where lawyer Wang Quanzhang was being tried. Wang's wife, Li Wenzu, was kept from attending the proceedings by security agents who had blocked the exit of her apartment complex since Tuesday.

Li told The Associated Press by phone Wednesday that Liu Weiguo, Wang's government-appointed lawyer, confirmed the trial had started. But he did not tell her whether it was now over or whether a verdict had been reached.

The court said in a statement on its website that it "lawfully decided not to make public" the trial hearings because the case involved state secrets. A decision will be announced at a future date, the court said.

Wang is among more than 200 lawyers and legal activists who were detained in a sweeping 2015 crackdown. A member of the Fengrui law firm, among the most recognized in the field broadly known in China as "rights defending," he was charged with subversion of



Plainclothes security officers take away a supporter of Chinese human rights lawyer Wang Quanzhang near the Secondary Intermediate People's Court of Tianjin northeastern China's Tianjin municipality, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018.

state power in 2016. He has been held without access to his lawyers or family for more than three years. Fengrui has pursued numerous sensitive cases and represented outspoken critics of the ruling Communist Party. Wang represented members of the Falun Gong meditation sect that the government has relentlessly suppressed since banning it as an "evil cult" in 1999. Group leaders have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms and ordinary followers locked up as alleged threats. Legal advocacy had flourished in the decades following China's opening up, as lawyers defended the disenfranchised and contributed to a nascent civil society. Wang himself worked on several land rights cases on behalf of poor villagers.

While these lawyers frequently faced intimidation and harassment from the authorities, the roundup in 2015 marked a severe turn-

ing point — it made clear that human rights lawyers would come to face the kinds of charges previously reserved for those they defended. The coordinated sweep left lawyers detained, disbarred, under house arrest or facing vague charges. It's known as the "709 crackdown" for the date, July 9, on which the majority of them were taken. Most of the lawyers have since been released, though they can no longer practice. Wang is believed to be one of the last to be tried.

Li has campaigned tirelessly for her husband's release. Earlier this month, she and other wives of detained lawyers shaved their heads in an act of protest. In Chinese, the words for "hair" and "law" are near-homophones — "We can be hairless, but you can't be lawless," they chanted. She was given only two days' notice that the trial was to take place. The trials of Chinese human rights

figures are often scheduled during the Christmas period, when many Western diplomats and journalists are away on holiday.

On Tuesday, five cars were stationed outside Li's home, she said, and a state security officer urged her not to travel to Tianjin. On Wednesday, they cordoned off her apartment unit with police tape.

Li and Wang Qiaoling, the wife of another rights lawyer who was detained, said in a statement that a state security officer offered early Wednesday to drive them to Tianjin, but he said that the trial proceedings were not public and that they would not be allowed to attend.

Li and Wang wrote that they declined the officer's offer and tried to leave Li's apartment complex, only to find that all six gates out of the complex had police parked outside.

Diplomats from the U.S., Swiss, U.K. and German embassies were outside the Tianjin courthouse. They said they had requested access to attend the trial but were denied.

A man shouted his support for Wang Quanzhang before he was shoved into a car by plainclothes officers. "A frail scholar and you all torment him like this," Yang Chunlin yelled, referring to Wang. "Wang Quanzhang is the greatest person in China."

"I demand political reform, I demand civil rights, I demand elections within the party, respect for human rights," Yang said before he was taken away. □

Body of missing toddler found in Thai sugarcane plantation

BANGKOK (AP) — The search for a missing 2-year-old boy in which even elephants were employed ended grimly Tuesday with the discovery of the toddler's body in a sugarcane plantation in central Thailand. Suphan Buri provincial governor Nimit Wan-chaitanawong said the boy's body was found around five kilometers (three miles) from where he was last seen, and officials are collecting evidence to determine his cause of death.

Sului Piew, the son of migrant workers from Myanmar, went missing Dec. 17 when he went out to play near the plantation where his parents work. Hundreds of rescuers combed through an 80-acre (32-hectare) field of 2-meter-high (6.6-foot-high) sugarcane plants to search for the child, whose body was finally discovered near a small irrigation stream on the plantation. Police Col. Ronakorn Prakongsri told television station ThaiPBS that Sului's body was found with injuries on his legs but he added that officers would wait for an autopsy report before they pursued investigating the point. Governor Nimit said the missing boy's family had informed authorities of his disappearance when his 3-year-old friend told her parents that she saw Sului being abducted. □

Wave of sexual abuse allegations shakes Argentina

By **ALMUDENA CALATRAVA**
DEBORA REY
Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — For months, Claudia Guebel could only tell family and friends about a traumatizing encounter with a colleague in Argentina's Senate.

At the beginning of this year, she said, Pedro Fiorida, a senator's chief of staff, grabbed her violently by the arms like a "hunter who catches prey." The, she felt his tongue inside her mouth. The terror that seized her made those minutes seem eternal, she said. "I didn't know how to react, I was paralyzed," said Guebel, a congressional aide who previously worked for the same senator. In December, she was finally moved to file a formal complaint with judicial authorities after actress Thelma Fardin publicly accused actor Juan Darthes of raping her in 2009 when she was 16 and he was 45. Writers, politicians and journalists expressed support for Fardin on social media. "With Thelma's statements, everything was awakened in me," said Guebel, 52.

Fiorda could not be reached for comment by The Associated Press, and Darthes says he is innocent. But Guebel is now part of a wave of women who have come forward in the South American country with sexual misconduct accusations in what has inevitably been compared to the #MeToo movement in the United States, where the worlds of media, business,



In this Dec. 19, 2018 photo, congressional aide Claudia Guebel speaks during an interview, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

entertainment and politics have been roiled by allegations against powerful men.

Women say they are also taking a cue from "Ni Una Menos," an Argentine grassroots movement that emerged in 2015 and spread globally. The movement has drawn thousands into massive demonstrations against femicide and violence against women in Argentina, where a bill attempting to legalize abortion was defeated in August. "For a while in Argentina we have been witnessing a paradigm shift ... where the voices of women are beginning to be heard, understood and, most importantly, accompanied by others," said Fabiana Tunez, executive director

of the National Institute for Women in Argentina, who said the accusations by Fardin lent the movement more visibility.

On Dec. 11, the actress announced she had filed a criminal complaint in Nicaragua, where she says she was raped by Darthes in a hotel during a promotional tour for "Ugly Duckling," a children's television series. Darthes, who has since moved to his native Brazil, has denied the allegation. Three other women also have accused him of harassment or abuse.

"We are all very shocked," said Sabrina Cartabia, Fardin's lawyer. "It is opening up the possibility of talking about something very painful."

In Argentina there is no na-

tional registry of victims of sexual abuse. But a survey found that 45 percent of the 2,750 students polled at public and private universities in Buenos Aires reported suffering physical or psychological abuse and 9 percent had suffered sexual abuse. The survey was published in a 2018 report by UNICEF Argentina.

In recent weeks, telephone lines that receive reports of gender violence have seen sharp increases — the largest coming on Dec. 12, the day after Fardin's news conference.

Tunez, who has helped manage the phone lines, said she was surprised by calls from women 70 to 80 years old with stories of childhood abuse. "They just wanted someone to

hear them, because legally nothing can be done," she said. In recent days, alumnae of the ORT Jewish community school, including the daughter of Argentine politician Daniel Filmus, have also publicly accused a school doctor of sexually abusing them when they were between 13 and 14 years old. School authorities announced that they are willing to cooperate with an investigation.

But the reverberations of the larger movement have spread much further. Women from political parties and youth groups like La Campora have started reporting sexual aggression to blogs, social media and press outlets. The main content producer of Argentine television, Pol-Ka, has committed itself to incorporating a protocol for giving assistance in cases of sexual harassment and abuse. And the Senate passed a law that requires the state to provide training to public employees about gender-related topics.

"Argentina is leading the social mobilization of thousands and thousands of women like never before seen in Latin America, which is having an impact on sister countries," said Maria Elena Naddeo, who works at the ombudsman's office in the city of Buenos Aires, referring to similar movements in Uruguay, Bolivia, Ecuador and Chile.

For her part, Guebel, the assistant to lawmakers, says she will continue working to eradicate a culture of patriarchy. □



Relatives and friends surround the urn with ashes of opposition Puebla state Gov. Martha Erika Alonso during a farewell ceremony in Puebla City, southeast of Mexico, Tuesday, Dec. 25, 2018.
Associated Press

Mexico's AMLO refutes blame for chopper crash

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador says "neofascists" and conservatives are blaming the government for a helicopter crash that killed two opposition politicians.

Lopez Obrador refused to speculate on what caused the crash, but military ex-

perts said no explosive devices were found in the wreckage. Mexico asked the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board for help with a probe, but the U.S. government shutdown has delayed the request.

Lopez Obrador said Wednesday that social media videos that suggest the helicopter was shot down

were the work of "neofascist groups who are angry about our victory and are trying to slander us."

The Monday crash killed opposition Gov. Martha Erika Alonso of the central state of Puebla and her husband, ex-Gov. Rafael Moreno Valle. Two pilots and a third passenger also died. □

LOCAL



Condominiums with a Plus



EAGLE BEACH — Imagine: a white-sanded beach, blue-turquoise ocean, inviting pool with lazy sun beds and an amazing residence where you feel home, no actually: it IS your home. A dream come true as you are the owner of a condominium at Azure Beach Residences, right on the foot of Aruba's Eagle Beach, a multiple rewarded beach being the best in the Caribbean. Aruba Today talked to one of the enthusiastic sales representatives of this piece of heaven, Marinelda Cataya.

All condominiums face the clear blue ocean with the white-sandy beaches, even the ones on the ground floor. Tower I is completed and space wise you cannot go wrong: the 2 -bedroom condominiums are 1024 sq. ft. and the 3-bedroom units 1670 sq. ft. Storage is included so just leave your chairs and bicycles locked up, even when you rent out your units, rooms are offered in lock offs meaning your personal belongings stay safe in one locked bedroom while the rest of the place can be rented out. Tower II is in construction and will have studios and 1-bedroom units. "And we have our separate building The Club House ready. We are very proud to show it."

We Can Show the Product

The big plus about this project is that you can actually see the result already, you do not buy from a drawing, and at Azure they can show you the end result for real. The construction of Tower II is running according to schedule, the condominiums are divided and planned to be ready in 2020. This tower has studios and 1-bedroom apartments, Tower I has only 2- and 3- bedroom units", Marinelda explains. Either for investment or pleasure, this is a great opportunity. "The interior of Tower II will differ as we will use more colors and natural elements like wood. Tower I is mainly in white styling. Quality is high, we are going for the newest technology with regards to windows for example. A soft opening is scheduled for the realtors and media to show the product."

Cozy Club House

Guests are already using the facilities of the residence and remodeling their homes. "The Club House is finished now and I can tell

you honestly that the amenities we have here are unique. They are different from the other condominiums because we have a separate building where we offer a nice lobby, a restaurant bar, the owners club with a pool table, and where you can play chess or any kind of game and an outside area with BBQ/grills so you can bring your family and friends along", says Marinelda. "It creates that family, intimate, homey feeling. By the way we share amenities with Blue Residences where they have a playground for kids as well as a beach tennis field." The Club House restaurant is a kind of open lobby bar with breakfast, lunch and dinner available. The fitness has an amazing view likewise the members club which offers laptop connections and WIFI of course. Other amenities are two infinity pools, a Jacuzzi area and a tennis court. "Important to mention is that we are energy efficient as all units have double glass,

we use a well for watering the garden and solar panels for lightning. We are most eco-friendly as possible." says Marinelda. In her opinion potential buyers want to feel trust and that is exactly what Azure offers as you see the finished result of Tower I where they almost sold all units. "So you can feel comfortable with the investment. Unique also is that you will find few condominiums right in front of the beach, so your sunset and ocean view are included. Your condo is delivered with luxury appliances, here you meet the comfort of a resort yet the privacy of your own place. Your home with the convenience of the resort."

For more information you can visit the website [http:// www.azure-aruba.com](http://www.azure-aruba.com).

The sales office is open every week day from 9 AM -5 PM, Saturdays 10 AM - 1 PM. ☐



Harbour House is another project of the Pering Group offering 94 condominiums, just in front of Renaissance Mall. There are studio's and 2-3 bedrooms, a 360 degrees view gym and Jacuzzi on top. Located in the former Marazul building. More information can be found at: [www. Harbourhousearuba.com](http://www.Harbourhousearuba.com)

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You Can Help by adding some Happiness: Hand Bag filled with Art & Creativity



ORANJESTAD — Muchila Creativo is a special foundation. The inspiration that art and music provides forms their tool to work in different fields. Rose-marie Provence, president of Fundación Muchila Creativo, explains us more about this creative place. **"We exist for 15 years already this year. The reason we have started this foundation is that we have experienced the need for music and art within our job as teachers. I am referring to Mathilda Vloor, Conrad de Rozario and myself, three teachers of elementary school who founded this foundation."**

The three wished to offer more to the children than just the regular classes and thus started to offer musical projects that the children loved to participate in. "The word Muchila is actually Papiamentu for hand bag, used in former days by fishermen or farmers to stack away their tools while working. The symbolic meaning is the luggage you carry with you, so your emotional ballast that can be used or transformed in a positive way by performing art and music. Our goal is to promote art and music in the widest sense of the word, for all age categories." Fundación Muchila Creativo is a foundation that works in the social, cultural, artistic, creative and therapeutic field. They want to motivate children, youth and adolescents to express themselves in the fields of music, dance, visual arts, drama and arts as a whole. They also want to expand their creative horizon by means of literature and multimedia. This is done by means of courses, lectures, presentations, workshops, seminars and expositions.

The Process Matters

Rose-marie: "We work on the principles of three pillars: Educational & Artistic, Cultural, and Social-Emotional & Therapeutic. We work constant within these areas. Educational



meaning that we work together with schools, artistic reflects to the lessons like theatre, music and visual art. Cultural: We contribute often to events like 'Arte e Cultura', carioca nights and so on. Social-emotional and therapeutic: Every year we work on a musical with elementary schools, the topic here is the musical of West Side Story. While working with the children we have noticed the social problems that they often deal with and the project can help some children to express themselves and release their stress. That is exactly what we strive for, the process is important to us, not the end result." Therapeutic applies also to the integration of art and music within autism sessions or for people that go through depressions. The children express themselves with painting classes, music lessons and storytelling for example. The foundation also orga-

nizes workshops for companies.

The Program & The People

Workshops and Projects for schools offered by the foundation are: Music Box, Drum Circle and musical, Folklore dance and Music and Art workshops for teachers. Courses within their program are: Theater Production for children and adults, Music course and Artbox / Visual Art courses. Board of the foundation is formed by President: Rose-Marie Provence MSc, Secretary: Emerita Emerencia and Treasurer: Sandy Patrick Maduro. The Commissionaire exists of Marielle Perez, Geofrey Wever, Monique Croes and Arts teachers are Emerita Emerencia :Theatre, Frans Lacle: Visual Arts, Jane Lanooij: Music, Rose-Marie Provence: Music and Mayra Stroeken: Dance. □



If you would like to support the foundation, please call + (297) 583 8921 If you would like to donate, you are welcome to contribute through the bank account Arubabank # 256 4640 190 is on the name of Fundación Muchila Creativo. For more information visit the website: muchilacreativo.org/main or Facebook Fundación Muchila Creativo. Thank You!



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ORANJESTAD —The evening of December 31st will be special; first all milestones of 2018 are celebrated and preparations are made for a new year. Enjoy the 'dinner party' at Renaissance Ocean Suites

Beach including live entertainment, delicious food, a super premium open bar and of course a fantastic fireworks show!

For those who want to ring in the New Year in a special

way, the New Year's Party at Renaissance Ocean Suites is recommended! The party starts at 20.00. Tickets are available for adults at \$ 180, youngsters between the ages of 13 and 17 pay \$ 80, children

between the ages of 5 and 12 pay \$ 45 and kids under the age of 5 are allowed to party for free. The 'all inclusive' price gives the visitor access to an extensive buffet and all guests can enjoy a super premium open bar and live entertainment by NBO and Miniteca Genie.

Dance, eat and celebrate the New Year!

The buffet consists of an extensive range of appetizers including the Renaissance Waldorf, Roasted Beet and Goat Cheese, Roasted Peruvian Potato Salad, Avocado & Shrimp and many more. The 'Antipasto' section offers Grilled Artichoke, Pickled Mushrooms, Dried Fruits and many more. On the menu, succulent main dishes such as Poached Salmon, Peking Chicken, Chilled Black Tiger Shrimp, Oysters, Clams, and Cray-

fish. The 'carving station' will feature Roasted Suckling Pig and Prime Rib. Did anyone say 'hot'? This 'Hot Griddle Station', will feature Lobster, Bacon wrapped Tenderloin and Lamb Chops. The 'Hot Selection' offers Baby Back Ribs, Chicken Roulade and Eggplant Parmesan. Room for dessert?

Try the wide variety of mousse and pies including Apple Crumble, White Chocolate, Pistachio, Dark Chocolate and Rum Caramel Bread Pudding. Renaissance Ocean Suites invites everyone to celebrate this New Year in an elegant 'setting' with a cozy atmosphere.

For reservations and information please call 523-6115. Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino wishes the entire community of Aruba a dazzling 2019! □

Monetary Policy (November 2018)



During its meeting of November 19, 2018, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)² of the Centrale Bank van Aruba (CBA) decided to keep the reserve requirement at 11.0 percent and to uphold the advance rate at 1.0 percent, after reviewing the most recent economic and monetary data. The following information and analysis were considered in reaching this decision, based on September 2018 data.

International reserves

Both the international reserves (+0.7 percent) and official reserves (+3.1 percent) recorded growth in the first nine months of 2018. Consequently, the international reserves and the official reserves reached, respectively, Afl. 1,837.6 million and Afl. 1,700.1 million at end September 2018.

Credit developments

Growth in total commercial bank credit remained positive (+2.5 percent) in September 2018, compared to December 2017. This development was mainly driven by housing mortgages.

Inflation

The 12month average rate of inflation rose to 2.3 percent in September 2018, compared to -0.4 percent in September 2017, primarily the result of a higher indirect tax rate per July 1, 2018 and price increases in the transport and food components. The 12month core inflation (excluding energy and food) reached 1.2 percent.

Tourism

During the first nine months of 2018, tourism indicators development noted upturns, as growth was registered in tourist arrivals (+1.5 percent), visitor nights (+1.6 percent), and cruise visitor arrivals (+5.8 percent).

Money supply

In September 2018, money supply registered an increase of Afl. 133.9 million to Afl. 4,373.8 million compared to December 2017, resulting from expansions in the net domestic assets (+Afl. 94.2 million) and in the net foreign assets (+Afl. 39.7 million, excluding revaluation differences). □

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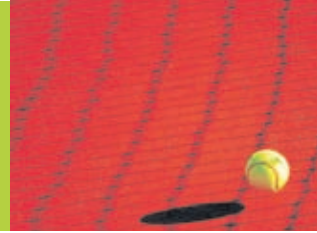
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SPORTS



Alabama quarterback Tua Tagovailoa passes the ball during an NCAA college football practice on Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018, in Miami Shores, Fla. Alabama plays Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl on Dec. 29.
Associated Press

Kyler, Tua and 'Generation Z' QBs take over college football

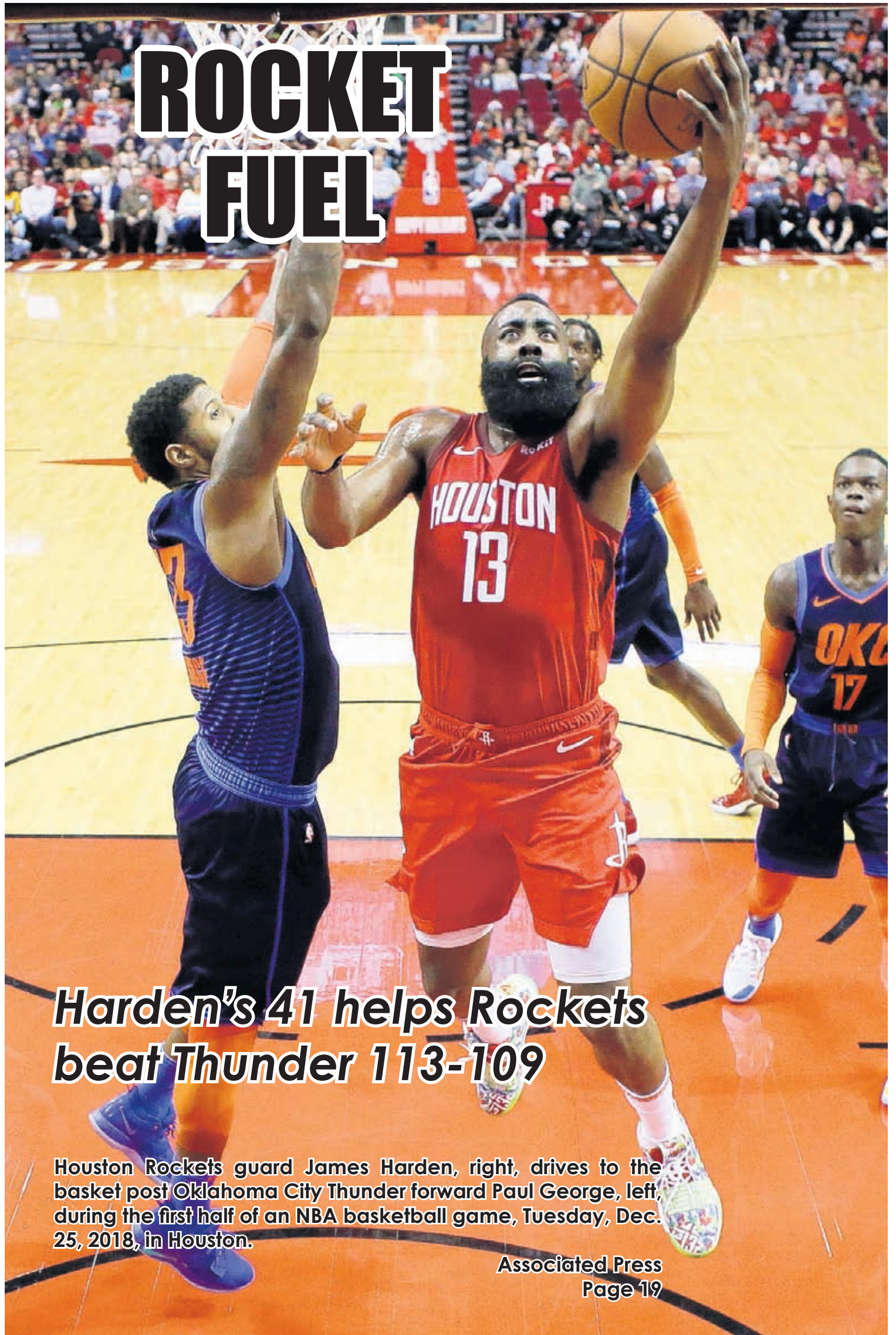
By RALPH D. RUSSO

AP College Football Writer

Trent Dilfer has been head coach for the national high school quarterback competition known as Elite 11 since 2011, and even in that short period of time the quality of players coming through the program has drastically improved.

"We've always had our handful of clearly the best," said Dilfer, the former first-round NFL draft pick and Super Bowl-winning quarterback with Baltimore. "One through three, one through five basically have kind of been the same every year. You just know they're going to make it. But five through 50 is 50 percent better now than it was when I started." Generation Z quarterbacks who grew up with personal coaches, 7-on-7 spring leagues and all they ever wanted to know about two-deep coverage on YouTube have taken over college football.

Continued on Page 23



ROCKET FUEL

Harden's 41 helps Rockets beat Thunder 113-109

Houston Rockets guard James Harden, right, drives to the basket post Oklahoma City Thunder forward Paul George, left, during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, Dec. 25, 2018, in Houston.

Associated Press
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Serena voted AP Female Athlete of the Year for 5th time

By **BRIAN MAHONEY**
AP Sports Writer

She showed up in Paris wearing a black catsuit, a reminder that nobody can command the Grand Slam stage quite like Serena Williams.

She reached the finals at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open, proving again how well she can play no matter how little she practices. Williams didn't win those or any other tournaments, which in every other situation might have made for a forgettable year.

In 2018, it was a remarkable one. Her rapid return to tennis after a health scare following childbirth was a victory in itself, and for that, Williams was voted The Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year for the fifth time. Williams received 93 points in balloting by U.S. editors and news directors announced Wednesday, while gymnast Simone Biles was second with 68. Notre Dame basketball player Arike Ogunbowale was third, while Olympic snowboarder Chloe Kim and swimmer Katie Ledecky, the 2017 winner, rounded out the top five.

All of those players won a title or titles in 2018, while Williams had to settle for just coming close a couple of times.

Now 37 and a new mother facing some players who



In this Sept. 6, 2018, file photo, Serena Williams celebrates after defeating Anastasija Sevastova, of Latvia, during the semifinals of the U.S. Open tennis tournament, in New York.

weren't even born when she turned pro in 1995, Williams isn't the same person who ruthlessly ran her way to 23 Grand Slam singles titles — the last of which came at the 2017 Australian Open when she was pregnant.

"I'm still waiting to get to be the Serena that I was, and I don't know if I'll ever be that, physically, emotionally, mentally. But I'm on my way," Williams said on the eve of the U.S. Open final. "I feel like I still have a ways to go. Once I get there, I'll

be able to play even hopefully better."

The Male Athlete of the Year will be announced Thursday.

The women's award has been won more only by Babe Didrikson Zaharias, whose six wins included one for track and five for golf.

Williams' previous times winning the AP honor, in 2002, 2009, 2013 and 2015, were because of her dominance.

This one was about her perseverance.

Associated Press

Williams developed blood clots after giving birth to daughter Alexis Olympia Ohanian Jr. on Sept. 1, 2017, and four surgeries would follow. She returned to the WTA Tour in March and played in just a pair of events before the French Open, where she competed in a skin-tight, full-length black catsuit.

She said the outfit — worn partly for health reasons because of the clots — made her feel like a superhero, but her game was rarely in superstar shape. She had

to withdraw in Paris because of a right pectoral injury and didn't play again until Wimbledon, where she lost to Angelique Kerber in the final.

Williams came up short again in New York, where her loss to Naomi Osaka in the final will be remembered best for her outburst toward chair umpire Carlos Ramos, who had penalized Williams for receiving coaching and later penalized her an entire game for calling him a "thief" while arguing.

That loss leaves her one major title shy of Margaret Court's record as she starts play next year in a WTA Tour that will look different in part because of new rules coming about after issues involving Williams. Players returning to the tour may use a "special ranking" for up to three years from the birth of a child, and the exemption can be used for seedings at big events. Also, the tour says players can wear leggings or compression shorts at its tournaments without a skirt over them.

Williams insists she is still driven to play and win as much if not more than before she was a mother. That drive is the focus of a Nike ad showing her in action.

"Getting this far, crazy," it says. "Stopping now, crazier." □

Comanche takes lead in Sydney to Hobart



The bowman of Black Jack is sprayed with water as the yacht heads the field during the start of the Sydney Hobart yacht race in Sydney, Wednesday, Dec. 26, 2018.

Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — Supermaxi Black Jack was the first yacht through Syd-

ney Heads for the second successive year, but 2017 winner Comanche has

surged into the lead in the 74th Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race on Wednesday. After three hours of racing, line honors favorite Comanche was setting a fast pace of around 27 knots, benefiting from north-easterly winds along the New South Wales state coast and had a lead of four nautical miles from supermaxi rivals InfoTrack, Wild Oats XI and Black Jack.

Earlier, in front of tens of thousands of onlookers on the shore and a flotilla of spectator boats on Sydney Harbour, Black Jack

reached the first rounding mark at Sydney Heads in a little over 13 minutes just ahead of InfoTrack and Wild Oats X, with Comanche rounding the mark in sixth place.

International entry Sun Hung Kai Scallywag from Hong Kong was fourth through Sydney Heads, but soon became one of two early retirements from the 85-strong fleet when the supermaxi sustained a broken bow sprint. The other retiree was TP52 Zen which withdrew due to rig damage.

Comanche, skippered by

Jim Cooney, set the race record of 1 day, 9 hours, 15 minutes, 24 seconds while winning the 628 nautical mile passage to Hobart, Tasmania last year in controversial circumstances. First-place finisher Wild Oats XI, which has won line honors nine times, was given a one-hour time penalty for an illegal tack on Comanche while still in Sydney Harbour, giving Comanche the win.

This edition is also the 20th anniversary of the infamous 1998 race where six sailors died after the fleet was hit by a large storm. □

NBA Capsules

LeBron gets hurt in Lakers' rout of Warriors

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — The Los Angeles Lakers lost LeBron James in the third quarter to a strained left groin then went out and beat the two-time defending champions without him Tuesday night, getting King James' 17 points, 13 rebounds and five assists before the injury in a surprising 127-101 rout of the Golden State Warriors. James grabbed at his left groin area with 7:51 left in the third after slipping under the Warriors' basket while trying for a loose ball. He tried to stretch it out, awkwardly walked toward the Lakers bench trying to loosen up before leaving on his own though gingerly out the tunnel for the locker room. Stephen Curry made consecutive 3s shortly after James exited, and the Warriors got within 78-76 at the 2:48 mark of the third — but Kyle Kuzma and the persistent Lakers stayed at it every possession. Curry wound up with 15 points but the home fans had seen enough well before the final buzzer and headed out for the rest of Christmas.

Kuzma contributed 19 points with a pretty baseline 3 late, Ivica Zubac had 18 points and 11 rebounds and Rajon Rondo 15 points and 10 assists off the bench as the Lakers snapped an 11-game losing streak on the Warriors' home floor since a 118-115 overtime win Dec. 22, 2012. Los An-

geles also ended a seven-game skid overall in the rivalry with its first win in the series since March 6, 2016.

CELTICS 121, 76ERS 114, OT BOSTON (AP) — Kyrie Irving hit back-to-back 3-pointers in overtime for six of his 40 points and the Celtics rallied to a win over the 76ers. Irving, who forced the OT on a jump shot with 20 seconds left in the fourth, also pulled down 10 rebounds for the Celtics, who trailed 113-108 with 3:33 left in the extra period before rallying behind Irving down the stretch.

Ben Simmons' two free throws with 2:15 left to put the Sixers up 114-112, but Philadelphia didn't score again.

Irving's 3-pointer with 3:01 left gave Boston its first lead of overtime at 115-114, then after a miss by Philadelphia, Irving hit another 3-pointer with 1:28 left and Boston fans leaped to their feet and cheered louder than they had all night.

Jayson Tatum and Marcus Morris scored 23 apiece for Boston and Terry Rozier had 10 points.

ROCKETS 113, THUNDER 109 HOUSTON (AP) — James Harden scored 41 points and the Rockets beat the Thunder for their seventh win in the last eight games. Harden has scored 30 points or more in a career-high seven games in a row, marking the first time a



Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert, rear, dunks on Portland Trail Blazers center Jusuf Nurkic (27) during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Dec. 25, 2018, in Salt Lake City.

Associated Press

player has done that since Russell Westbrook had eight consecutive 30-point games in November 2016. A 3-pointer by Paul George with less than two minutes left got Oklahoma

City within 4 before Harden missed a 3. Westbrook missed a shot for the Thunder, but George stole the ball from Harden and was fouled by him.

George made both free

throws to get the Thunder within 2 with 43.6 seconds left. Harden then drove past George and into the lane for a layup to make it 112-108 with 20.4 seconds left. □



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James stands on the court after straining his groin during the second half of the team's NBA basketball game against the Golden State Warriors on Tuesday, Dec. 25, 2018, in Oakland, Calif.

Associated Press

James' MRI shows groin strain, Lakers say he's day to day

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. (AP) — LeBron James got good news Wednesday on his injured groin.

But his games-played streak will end anyway.

An MRI exam showed that the four-time NBA MVP merely strained his left groin in the Los Angeles Lakers' victory at Golden State Warriors on Christmas night. James will likely be dealing with soreness for several

days, and the Lakers said he won't travel with them for their game Thursday in Sacramento.

From there, he will be listed as day-to-day.

"Dodged a bullet," James tweeted.

Thursday will mark the first time James has sat since the final game of the 2016-17 regular season, which he took off for rest.

James had appeared in

156 consecutive games, going back to the start of the 2017 playoffs with Cleveland. His last extended absence due to injury was an eight-game stint to deal with back and knee aches midway through the 2014-15 season.

James is averaging 27.3 points, 8.3 rebounds and 7.1 assists this season, his 16th in the NBA and first with the Lakers. □

Saints, Rams, Bears highlight top 3 in AP Pro32 poll



New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees (9) celebrates a touchdown by running back Alvin Kamara, not pictured, in the first half of an NFL football game in New Orleans, Sunday, Dec. 23, 2018.

By **SIMMI BUTTAR**

NEW YORK (AP) — The road to the Super Bowl in the NFC will go through the Big Easy.

Though the Saints' path to get to Atlanta could be challenging: The top three teams in the latest AP Pro32 poll are all from the NFC.

The Saints received all 12

first-place votes for 384 points in balloting Wednesday by media members who regularly cover the NFL.

New Orleans (13-2) clinched the top seed in the NFC after Sunday's 31-28 win over Pittsburgh. The previous time New Orleans had the top seed in

the NFC was 2009 when it reached and won the Super Bowl.

"The news is all good for the Saints: They clinch home-field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs with a thrilling win over the Steelers, and (quarterback) Drew Brees has a chance to win his first-ever regular-season MVP award," Newsday's Bob Glauber said.

The NFC West champion Los Angeles Rams jumped three places to No. 2 after dominating Arizona without star running back Todd Gurley. The Rams can clinch a first-round bye with a win against San Francisco in the regular-season finale. NFC North champion Chicago Bears inched up a spot to No. 3.

"With a swarming defense and a solid ground game, the Bears appear poised to make some waves in January along the frosty shores of Lake Michigan," said Ira Kaufman of Fox 13 in Tampa.

The next three teams in the poll are all from the AFC.

Kansas City and the Los Angeles Chargers, tied at 11-4 in the AFC West, slipped to No. 4 and No. 5 respectively. The Chiefs dropped a spot after their 38-31 loss at Seattle on Sunday night, and the Chargers fell from No. 2 after losing to Baltimore on Saturday night.

The New England Patriots, who won the AFC East for the 10th consecutive year, moved up a spot to No. 6. Seattle climbed three spots to No. 7 after clinching a playoff berth with a win over the Chiefs.

The Houston Texans slipped two spots to No. 8 after losing to the Philadelphia Eagles 32-30 on Jake Elliott's field goal as time expired Sunday. However, the first-place Texans clinched a playoff spot later in the day when the Steelers lost.

Houston will clinch the AFC South with a win over the Jaguars.

The surging Baltimore Ra-

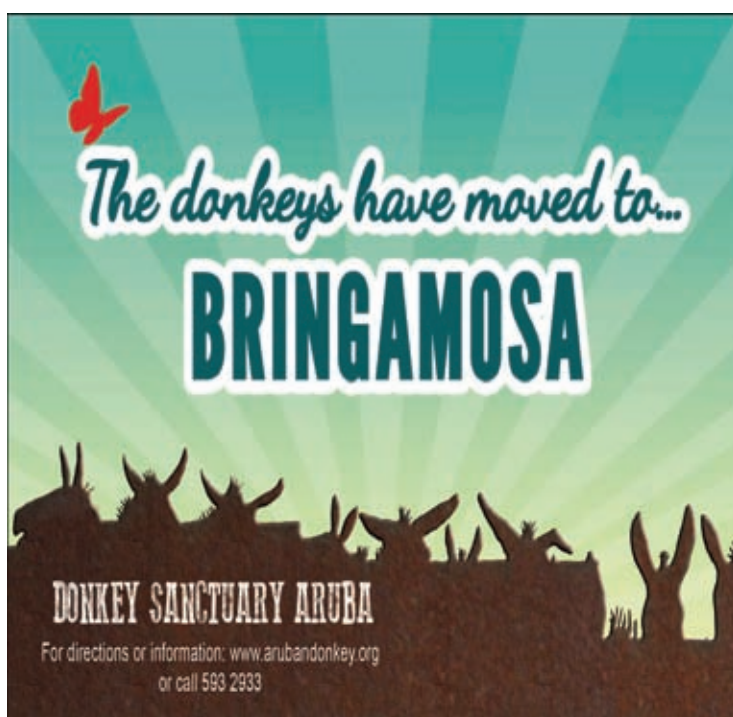
vens jumped three spots to No. 9. The Ravens (9-6) lead the AFC North by a half-game over Pittsburgh. The Ravens host Cleveland on Sunday and will take the division with a win.

"Who wants to play them?," asked Fox Sports' John Czarnecki of the Ravens, who were 4-5 entering their bye week and have won five of six overall.

The Steelers need to win at home against the last-place Bengals and have the Ravens stumble for their best chance at reaching the postseason.

The Indianapolis Colts fell one spot despite rallying past the New York Giants to round out the top 10. The Colts and Tennessee Titans, who remained No. 14 in the poll, are both 9-6 and end the regular season in a prime-time matchup on NBC. The winner will clinch a playoff spot and could take the division if the Texans stumble earlier in the day. □

Associated Press





Minnesota Vikings tight end Kyle Rudolph runs into the end zone untouched for a touchdown during the second half of an NFL football game against the Detroit Lions, Sunday, Dec. 23, 2018, in Detroit.

By **BARRY WILNER**

AP Pro Football Writer

Barring ties in Week 17 — and there are some wild scenarios should certain games end in draws Sunday — the road to the playoffs is quite straight in the NFC. The path to a first-round bye in the AFC has a bunch of curves in it.

Already in are NFC division winners Dallas (East), New Orleans (South), Chicago (North) and the Los Angeles Rams (West). AFC divisions clinched belong to New England in the East and, well, nobody else. But there are clear leaders. Seattle owns an NFC wild card, and the LA Chargers have one in the AFC, though they can still win the AFC West.

"You either believe in something or you don't," says coach Pete Carroll, whose 9-6 Seahawks made the postseason in what was considered a rebuilding year. "I think just staying the course and knowing we're on to something. Believing in the history. We know what we're capable of doing. We've shown it over a lot of years. You're always adapting, but it's staying what you're true to. I think that's what is happening. We look like a team that we have seen before, and that's powerful."

Most powerful so far has been New Orleans, with the league's best record at 13-2, and a dynamic offense led by Drew Brees. The Saints have home-field

advantage throughout the conference playoffs.

The Rams (12-3) get the other opening-round bye if they beat San Francisco on Sunday. If they lose and the Bears win at Minnesota, Chicago (11-4) earns the week off and Los Angeles drops to the third seed.

A Bears win also could keep the Vikings (8-6-1) out of the postseason, providing defending champion Philadelphia (8-7) wins at Washington. Only the Vikings or Eagles can get the second NFC wild card.

"We've got to empty the bucket, and that's the way we've got to play next week at home," Vikings tight end Kyle Rudolph says. "I'm really looking forward to that environment."

Associated Press

Barring ties, NFC playoff picture is clear, AFC more muddled

In the AFC, seeding is more muddled. Any of four teams could be the top or second seed.

The simplest route is if Kansas City (11-4) and New England (10-5), currently the top two in the conference, both win Sunday. But if the Chiefs lose at home to Oakland and the Chargers (11-4) win at Denver, Los Angeles moves into the top spot.

Houston (10-5) also could wind up No. 1 in the AFC with losses by the Chiefs, Patriots against the Jets, and Chargers. New England, the only unbeaten team at home this year, would get the first seed with a victory and losses by the Chiefs and Chargers.

And get this: Houston doesn't even own a division title. If the Texans fall at home to Jacksonville, the winner of the Colts at Titans game in Tennessee takes the AFC South, and the Texans become a wild card, joining either the Chiefs or Chargers.

Texans coach Bill O'Brien, whose club began the season 0-3, is intrigued by the division being so ensconced in the playoff picture this year.

"I think that's an interesting question because I can

remember the question was, two years ago, 'Why is the AFC South so bad?'" he says. "Now, 'Why is it so good?'"

"...I've never thought it was bad. I think every year it's been extremely difficult to win games in the division. I just think there's a lot of great coaches. You've got Frank (Reich) in Indy, Mike (Vrabel) in Tennessee, Doug (Marrone) in Jacksonville. You've got a lot of great players, quarterbacks, so you've got a tough division."

The AFC division often looked at as the toughest has been the North, which, not surprisingly, has come down to Baltimore vs. Pittsburgh. Except the Ravens (9-6) host the Browns, while the Steelers (8-6-1) must beat visiting Cincinnati and hope their archenemies from Cleveland sidetrack Baltimore, either beating or tying the Ravens.

Neither the Ravens nor the Steelers can be a wild card — except if Pittsburgh ties the Bengals, then Indianapolis and Tennessee also tie. Then the Steelers are in. Of course, Pittsburgh also can win the North with a draw and a loss by Baltimore.

Your head spinning yet? □

AP source: Broncos rookie Lindsay done for season



Denver Broncos running back Phillip Lindsay runs against the Oakland Raiders during the first half of an NFL football game in Oakland, Calif., Monday, Dec. 24, 2018.

Associated Press

By **ARNIE STAPLETON**

AP Pro Football Writer

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) —

Broncos running back Phillip Lindsay's sensational rookie season is over after tests showed he sustained major damage to his right wrist in Denver's loss at Oakland, a person with knowledge of the MRI results told The Associated Press.

The person, speaking on condition of anonymity because the team was off on Christmas Day, confirmed a report by 9News in Denver that medical tests Tuesday morning revealed ligament damage and a possible

scaphoid fracture.

Lindsay will miss the Broncos' final game against the Chargers (11-4) on Sunday, and it appears unlikely he'll be able to play in the Pro Bowl next month after becoming the first undrafted offensive rookie in NFL history to earn a Pro Bowl selection.

Lindsay was injured in the Broncos' 27-14 loss to the Raiders on Monday night, a third consecutive defeat that ensured the team of back-to-back losing seasons for the first time since 1971-72.

He'll be replaced by fel-

low rookie Royce Freeman and Devontae Booker on Sunday, when they'll need seek to avoid posting double-digit losses in consecutive seasons for the first time since 1966-67.

Although Lindsay said after the game Monday night that he planned to play in the finale, he was unable to use his right hand while getting dressed and needed assistance buttoning his shirt and putting on a necktie.

Lindsay, the former University of Colorado star who used his snubs from the NFL combine and 2018 draft as

fuel for a stellar rookie season, finishes his rookie campaign with 1,037 yards and nine touchdowns.

The Broncos have lost seven starters to season-ending injuries plus wide receiver Demaryius Thomas to a trade — he tore his right Achilles tendon on Sunday in Houston's 32-30 loss to Philadelphia.

Other Denver players out for the year are: linemen Matt Paradis, Ronald Leary and Max Garcia, wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders, tight ends Jake Butt and Jeff Heuerman and cornerback Chris Harris Jr. □

Tales from the PGA Tour

By **DOUG FERGUSON**
AP Golf Writer

Thousands of fans surrounded the first tee at Carnoustie on the final day of the British Open. No mistaking what they came to see, even if most of them could hardly see Tiger Woods at all.

One young girl proved resourceful.

From 30 yards beyond the rows of fans, she stood atop a large trash bin and pulled out her phone to capture the moment.

It was like that all year.

The gallery stood 15 rows deep behind the 16th tee at Innisbrook when Woods played the Valspar Championship for the first time, missing a playoff by one shot. They turned Bellerive into a rock concert when Woods tried to chase down Brooks Koepka in the PGA Championship. And they broke through the ropes and marched behind him to the 18th green at East Lake when he finally won again at the Tour Championship.

He was must-see golf, just like always.

Behind the scenes were plenty of other moments that went beyond the birdies, bogeys and trophies:

THE ROCKET SCIENTIST

Math has never been a strength for Austin Johnson, the brother and caddy for Dustin Johnson. Sometimes, it really doesn't matter.

Johnson's most memorable shot this year was on the 12th hole at Kapalua, where his drive on the 433-yard hole stopped 6 inches short of the cup in the final round. The day before was a shot even more exquisite. From light rough to the left, he hit a pitch that trundled down the slope, back up toward the green and into the cup for an eagle.

How long was the pitch?

Austin Johnson looked at the book. He first mentioned 65 yards. He looked at the book again and said it was 79 yards. And then he gave up.

"Hey, we're feel players," he said with a wink. "We're not all rocket scientists out



In this Jan. 4, 2017, file photo, Dustin Johnson, right, exchanges clubs with his caddy, brother Austin Johnson, on the 18th green during the pro-am prior to the Tournament of Champions golf event, at Kapalua Plantation Course in Kapalua, Hawaii.

Associated Press

here."

ROLL THE DICE

The conversation with Jordan Spieth outside the fitness center at the Sony Open ended because Tom Hoge was going into the interview room. Hoge, who has never won on the PGA Tour, was tied for the lead. "Let me tell you about Tom Hoge," Spieth said. "When he gets in contention, he will not back down."

And that's how it played out. Hoge stayed in or around the lead the entire final round until one shot that he missed by a fraction on the wrong side of the hole led to double bogey. He missed out on a playoff by one shot.

Told a month later about Spieth's prediction, Hoge was perplexed. He said they hardly spend any time together. They've never played together. They live on opposite ends of the Dallas-Fort Worth area. "My only connection with Jordan is I taught him how to play craps," Hoge said.

Two weeks later in Mexico, Spieth was reminded of the conversation in Hawaii. How would he know what to expect from Hoge if he

had never played golf with him?

"Because that's how he plays craps," Spieth said.

RAISE A GLASS

Maybe it was the return of Woods, but PGA Tour crowds got louder, rowdier and a little over the top. Rory McIlroy heard one fan at Bay Hill who kept yelling his wife's name, and McIlroy was close to confronting him. "I think it's gotten a little much, to be honest," he said. "I think that they need to limit the alcohol sales on the course." Beer was one thing. He was more concerned seeing the number of people with cocktails.

The greater concern was winning. McIlroy had gone 18 months since his last victory, and he got the job done that Sunday with five birdies on the last six holes for a 64 to win the Arnold Palmer Invitational. In honor of the King and his favorite drink, glasses of Ketel One vodka were passed out after his interview. McIlroy raised his glass for a toast, pausing to smile.

"And I'm the guy calling for a ban on alcohol," he said. □



In this Oct. 27, 2015, file photo, Seattle Sounders coach Sigi Schmid walks off the field following an MLS soccer training session in Tukwila, Wash.

Associated Press

Sigi Schmid, winningest MLS coach, dies at 65

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Sigi Schmid, the winningest coach in MLS history, has died. He was 65.

Schmid's family said he died Tuesday at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center. Schmid was hospitalized three weeks ago as he awaited a heart transplant.

"Our family is deeply saddened by his passing and is taking this time to grieve the loss of a tremendous husband, father, leader and mentor," the family said in a statement Wednesday through the Seattle Sounders, one of the three MLS teams Schmid coached. "We also recognize how much Sigi meant to so many people across the U.S. Soccer landscape and around the world at different levels of the game. That community meant a great deal to him as well. While we mourn his loss, we appreciate privacy during this challenging time."

Schmid had an MLS-record 266 regular-season and postseason victories in 18 seasons with the LA Galaxy, Columbus Crew and Sounders. He led teams to two MLS titles, the first with the Galaxy in 2002 and the second with the Crew in 2008, and was a two-time MLS Coach of the Year. He stepped down as coach of the Galaxy in September with six games left in the regular season.

"Major League Soccer is devastated by the news of the passing of Sigi Schmid," MLS Commissioner Don Garber said in a statement. "Sigi will go down as one of the leading figures in the history of our league. From Los Angeles to Columbus and Seattle, Sigi won more games than any coach in MLS history and led his clubs to multiple championships, including two MLS Cups and five Lamar Hunt U.S. Open Cups. Sigi's passion for soccer was unrivaled, and he was loved and admired by everyone in MLS. We deeply mourn his passing and send our heartfelt condolences to his wife Valerie, their children, and all of his loved ones."

Schmid coached UCLA for 19 seasons before moving on to MLS, leading the Bruins to three NCAA titles. Born in West Germany, Schmid moved to Southern California at age 4.

"Sigi was someone I respected immensely, not only for his success as a coach and dedication to his craft, but more importantly as a man and someone that truly left a positive mark on the people he encountered every day," Sounders owner Adrian Hanauer said in a statement. "He will be missed greatly by a lot of people, and on behalf of the soccer community here in Seattle, I can say that we would not be where we are now without him." □

'Generation Z'

Continued from Page 17

Combined with offensive innovation that many of these young QBs have seen since middle school, the passing game has reached new heights this season. With 25 bowls and the College Football Playoff national championship game left to play, interceptions are at an all-time low (0.82 per team per game) and the frequency of passes resulting in a touchdown (5.48 percent) is at an all-time high in the Bowl Subdivision. Major-college quarterbacks are completing passes at a near-record percentage (59.9) while average yards per attempt (7.41) is the best it has ever been. The current passer efficiency rating for all of FBS is 134.99, which would break the previous mark of 133.83 set in 2012. The latest statistical surge has been led by the quarterbacks who will play in the Orange Bowl semifinal on Dec. 29, when No. 1 Alabama faces No. 4 Oklahoma. Both Heisman Trophy winner Kyler Murray (205.72) of Oklahoma and Alabama's Tua Tagovailoa (202.30) are on pace to break the record for passer

efficiency rating set by former Sooners quarterback Baker Mayfield (198.92) last season. The quarterbacks in the Cotton Bowl playoff game have also done their part. No. 2 Clemson, led by freshman Trevor Lawrence (154.02 rating), faces No. 3 Notre Dame and quarterback Ian Book (162.50 rating). Murray, Tagovailoa and Lawrence were five-star talents who fall into Dilfer's "clearly the best" category. But polished passers are being churned out as if by a factory. "They have had 'Outlier' reps from doing all this stuff," said former UCLA coach and quarterback Rick Neuheisel, referring to Malcolm Gladwell's book that theorized 10,000 hours of practice is necessary to become an expert in a field. Or as Dilfer puts it: "They've had more opportunity to be the quarterback." Oliver Luck was the quarterback at West Virginia before being drafted by the Houston Oilers in the second round in 1982. Growing up in Cleveland, football was played during football season. "As soon as the season was over, that football would



In this Dec. 8, 2018, file photo, Oklahoma quarterback Kyler Murray holds the Heisman Trophy after winning the award in New York.

Associated Press

gather dust because you were more than likely involved in other sports," said Luck, who is now the commissioner of the XFL. By the time his son was in high school in Houston, spring practice was common and 7-on-7 — a pared-down version of football with no linemen or tackling, just quarterbacks, receivers and defensive backs — was growing. Andrew Luck was a two-time Heisman runner-up at Stanford and the first overall pick in the 2012 NFL draft by the Colts. He didn't dabble in private coaches until he was pre-

paring for the draft. "I don't know what the number is but, if I threw 5,000 passes (combining practices, games and workouts) in my high school career I bet Andrew threw 50,000 and today's kids might throw 100,000," Oliver Luck said. "A significant increase in the number and the quality of the repetitions. That's just the physical part." The information age has been a boon to quarterback development. What iPhone-dependent teens might lack in interpersonal skills, they often make up for in ability to absorb infor-

mation. "So a student-athlete comes in and he's like: 'I get what two-high safeties look like. I get what one-high safeties look like and that paints a picture for me.' They're learning that in the sixth grade. Eighth grade," said Pac-12 Networks analyst Yogi Roth, who works with Dilfer on Elite 11 and was part of Pete Carroll's staff at Southern California from 2005-09. Dilfer called Tagovailoa, the MVP of the 2016 Elite 11 competition, an "incredible learner. Maybe the best I've been around." □

Jones-Gustafsson UFC fight moved from Las Vegas to L.A. area



In this Nov. 2, 2018, file photo, Jon Jones, left, pushes Alexander Gustafsson out of the way during a news conference about their light heavyweight bout at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Associated Press

By KEN RITTER
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A UFC

rematch this weekend between Alex Gustafsson and former UFC light heavy-

weight champion Jon Jones is being moved from Las Vegas to Southern California after doping officials reported that Jones tested positive for low levels of a banned steroid, officials said Monday. UFC 232 events that had been set for Saturday at T-Mobile Arena will be held at The Forum in the Los Angeles suburb of Inglewood, UFC spokeswoman Lenee Breckenridge said. Breckenridge did not respond to questions from The Associated Press about the reason for the relocation. Jones (22-1) beat Gustafsson (18-4) in a tough bout in 2013. Jones hasn't fought since for testing positive for a banned steroid in July

2017. Nevada State Athletic Commission executive Bob Bennett said Jones was allowed to withdraw his application for a fight license in Nevada after commission Chairman Anthony Marnell III said he wanted to postpone the fight until after a January hearing about Jones' recent doping tests. The U.S. Anti-Doping Agency said it got notice Thursday that urine samples from a Dec. 9 test showed Jones had what the agency called an extremely small amount of an anabolic steroid metabolite in his system. It was the same substance that was detected in July 2017, when Jones' victory over Daniel Cormier for the

light heavyweight title was overturned and Jones received a 15-month suspension for doping. "At these extremely low levels, Jones obtained no performance enhancement," a statement from the doping agency said. It said Jones is not facing proceedings for violating UFC anti-doping policy. Breckenridge said in a statement that AXS.com planned refunds at original points of purchase for buyers of tickets to the Las Vegas event. She said Las Vegas ticket buyers will be able to buy UFC 232 tickets at noon PST Wednesday, followed at 2 p.m. by UFC Fight Club members and 3 p.m. by the public. □

Idaho lab protects U.S. infrastructure from cyber attacks

By **KEITH RIDLER, Associated Press**

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho (AP)

— It's called the "Dark Side" because the 50 workers there prefer to keep the lights low so they can dim the brightness on their computer screens.

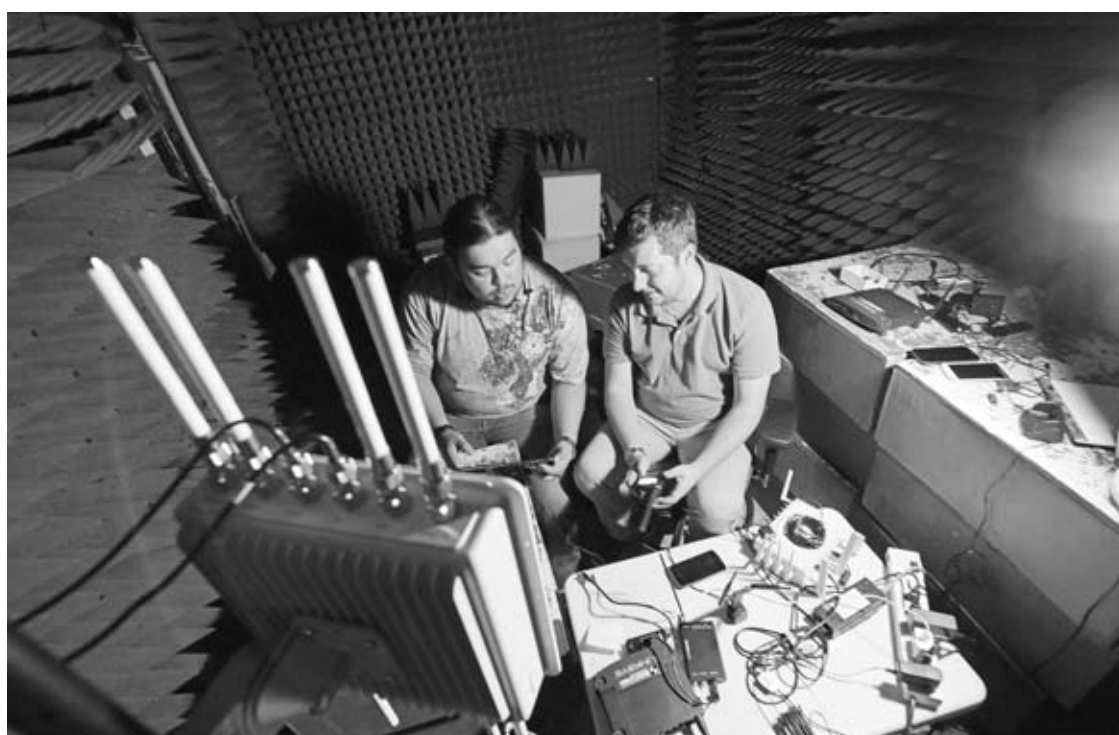
Or maybe it's because of what they do in cyber research and development.

Questions about exactly what goes on at the heart of one of the United States' primary cybersecurity facilities at the Idaho National Laboratory aren't always answered, and photos by outsiders aren't allowed.

What is shared is that the U.S. is rushing to catch up with what cybersecurity experts say are threats by hackers to systems that operate energy pipelines, hydroelectric projects, drinking water systems and nuclear power plants across the country. Hackers opening valves, cutting power or manipulating traffic lights, for example, could have serious consequences.

Scott Cramer, who directs the lab's cybersecurity program, said current efforts mostly involve "bolting on" cybersecurity protections to decades-old infrastructure control systems amid concerns they've already been infiltrated by malicious entities waiting for the opportune time to strike.

"This is no joke — there are vulnerabilities out there," he said. "We're pretty much in



In this September 2018 photo provided by the Idaho National Laboratory, INL interns **Armando Juarez Jr., left, and Jordan Mussman** work in the Faraday room in a cybersecurity electronics lab in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

reaction mode right now." The Idaho National Laboratory is mainly known as the nation's primary lab for nuclear research. But in the past decade, its cybersecurity work has put it on the leading edge there as well, and it's expanding.

A new 80,000-square-foot (7,400-square-meter) building called the Cybercore Integration Center will hold 20 laboratories and 200 workers. Another 67,000-square-foot (6,200-square-meter) building called the Collaborative Computing Center will house one of the nation's most powerful supercomputers. They are expected

to be finished next fall at a cost of about \$85 million.

"We're almost out of space, and we're hiring like mad," Cramer said. "So having that (integration center) building in a year is going to be incredible for us."

The lab's focus is on what

Associated Press

are called critical infrastructure control systems, as opposed to cybersecurity systems intended to protect information, such as banking or personal health records.

Its employees work to prevent threats like one that

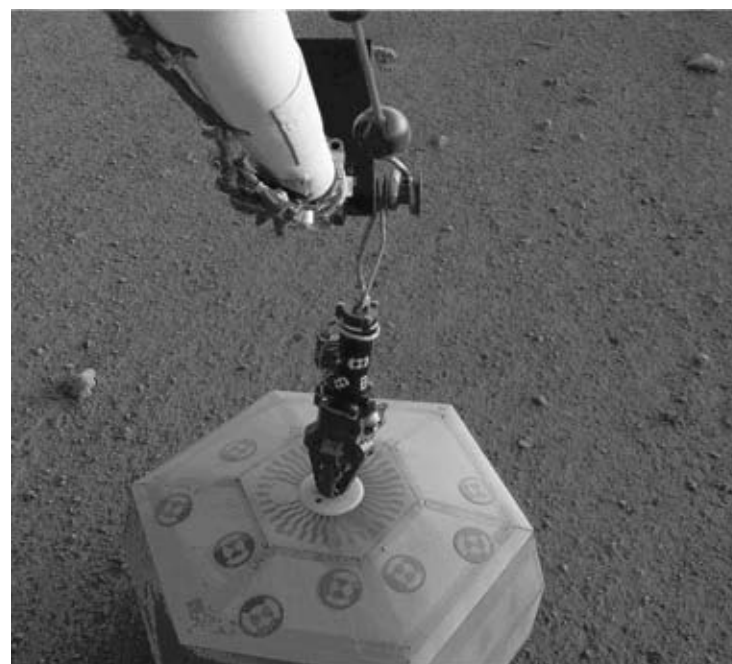
occurred in 2013, in which the Justice Department said seven Iranian hackers working at the behest of the Iranian government gained access to the controls of a dam in the suburbs of New York City.

Prosecutors said the hackers would have been able to remotely access the dam's gate, but it was disconnected at the time for maintenance. Prosecutors in an indictment made public in 2016 called it a "frightening new frontier in cybercrime."

The hackers remain wanted by the FBI.

The Dark Side room is in one of multiple buildings in Idaho Falls that house the lab's cybercore, a division within National and Homeland Security. It's decorated with workers' "alter egos," life-sized cardboard cutouts of "Star Wars" heroes and other famous characters such as Sheldon, the genius and socially inept main character of the comedy show "The Big Bang Theory." □

Mars lander sets quake monitor on planet's red surface



This photo provided by NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, shows the new Mars lander placing a quake monitor on the planet's dusty red surface.

By **MARCIA DUNN**
AP Aerospace Writer
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA's new Mars lander has placed a quake monitor on the planet's

Associated Press
dusty red surface, just a few weeks after its arrival.

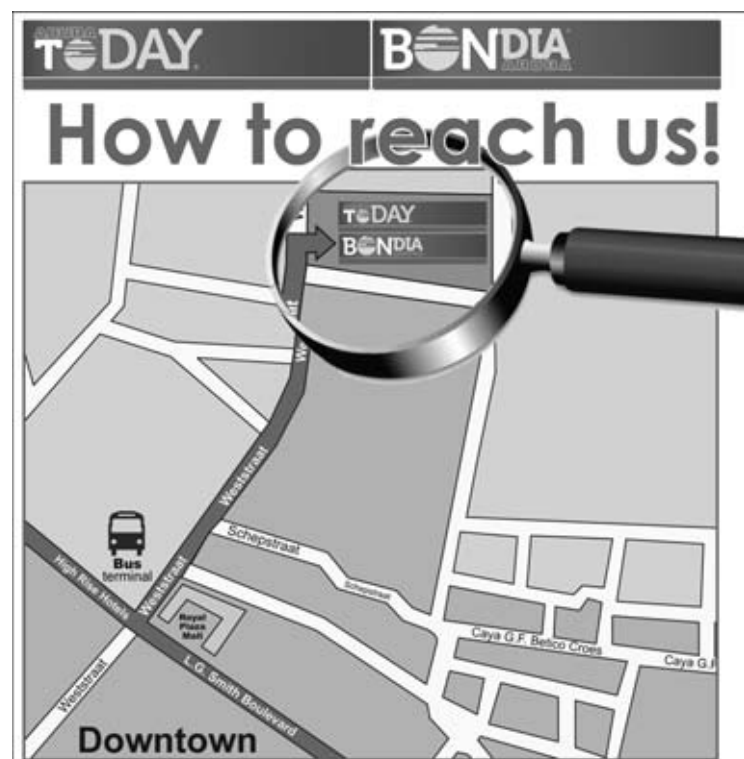
Mars InSight's robotic arm removed the seismometer from the spacecraft deck and set it on the ground

Wednesday to monitor Mars quakes. Project manager Tom Hoffman called the milestone "an awesome Christmas present."

It's the first time a robotic arm has lowered an experiment onto the Martian surface. The ground is slightly tilted, and so flight controllers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, still need to make the seismometer level.

The French dome-shaped seismometer is a little over 5 feet (1.6 meters) in front of the stationary lander, about as far as the arm can reach.

Next month, InSight's arm will put a wind cover over the seismometer and set down another experiment. The heat probe, dubbed the mole, will burrow up to 16 feet (5 meters) into Mars to measure internal temperatures. □





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What 2019 may hold for your finances

By SARAH SKIDMORE SELL
Associated Press

It's tough to know what each new year may hold. But when it comes to economic issues, there are usually enough indicators to provide a solid glimpse into what's ahead. So we asked experts to weigh in on how they anticipate how those big drivers may impact your financial well-being in 2019.

INTEREST RATES

The Federal Reserve recently announced that it is raising its key interest rate by a quarter of a point, to a range of 2.25 to 2.5 percent. That marks the fourth hike this year and lifts the benchmark rate to its highest point since 2008. But the Fed indicated it only anticipates two hikes for the year ahead.

Greg McBride, chief analyst at Bankrate, says borrowers already felt the pinch from higher rates and will see the effect of the latest hike soon.

"They are feeling the impact, and unfortunately, whether the Fed raises rates once, twice or three times, borrowing rates are going to go up," McBride said.

People who have variable rate debt, like credit cards, will see it first. A quarter of a point increase by the Fed could be reflected as soon as one to two statement cycles later. To avoid taking a hit, pay down your debt aggressively. If you have a variable rate home equity



In this Jan. 30, 2018, file photo, Loredana Gonzalez, of Doral, Fla., fills out a job application at a JobNewsUSA job fair in Miami Lakes, Fla.

line of credit or adjustable rate mortgage, see if you can move to a fixed rate. "Your best defense is a good offense," McBride said. "Take steps to insulate yourself from further rate hikes."

On the flip side, if you are able to save, you can make a bit more off that money. It pays to shop around as many banks are offering around 2.4 percent on basic savings accounts these days. McBride noted that this is the first time in roughly a decade that savers can earn more on savings than the rate of inflation.

GAS PRICES

Expect prices to be relatively stable compared to

this year, says Tom Kloza, global head of energy analysis for the Oil Price Information Service.

Kloza said there is a good chance that 2019 will be book-ended by a very weak start for prices and a shaky finish, with prices around \$2.35 to \$2.40 a gallon at each end. In between, prices will likely rise for both crude oil and gasoline.

Kloza expects the highest prices should occur in the second and third quarters. He anticipates national averages in the \$2.75 to \$2.85 per gallon neighborhood, with perhaps a dozen or so high-tax states flirting with \$3 a gallon or more at

those times.

Western states, including some Rocky Mountain states, will probably move well above \$3 gallon, led by California, Hawaii, Alaska, Washington, Oregon and Nevada.

Gasoline demand should

be relatively flat thanks to an aging population and more efficient vehicles.

JOBS AND WAGES

Unemployment is low, and is likely to fall further in the coming year, he said. There are a record number of job openings, across nearly all industries. With such a tight job market, Zandi expects wage growth will continue to accelerate from about 3 percent currently to 3.5 percent a year from now.

"Workers have the upper hand with their employers, and that should remain the case in the coming year," he said.

Glassdoor Chief Economist Andrew Chamberlain said that one of the drivers for this tight job market ahead is an aging workforce. For the first time in U.S. history, there will likely be more retirees in America than children under age 18 by 2035, according to U.S. Census data. So as those people leave their jobs, there will be a continued struggle to find the right workers to replace them. □

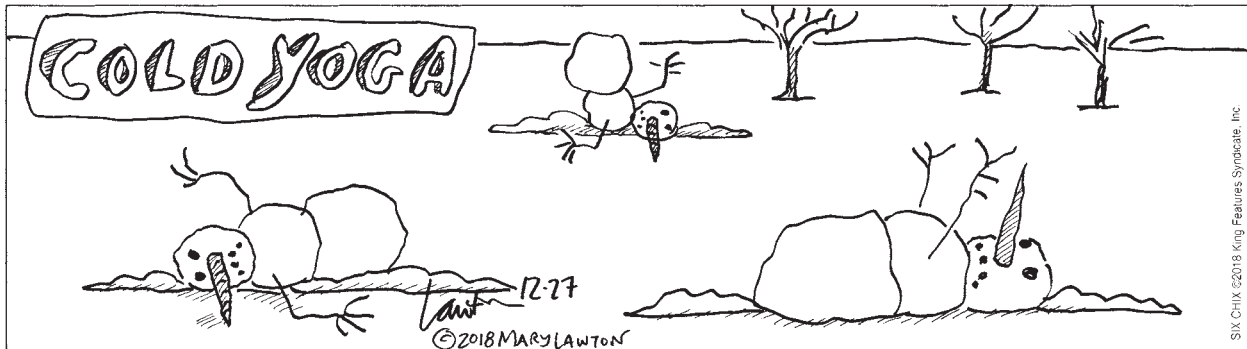


Bubali 143, in front of SuperFood Plaza Mall

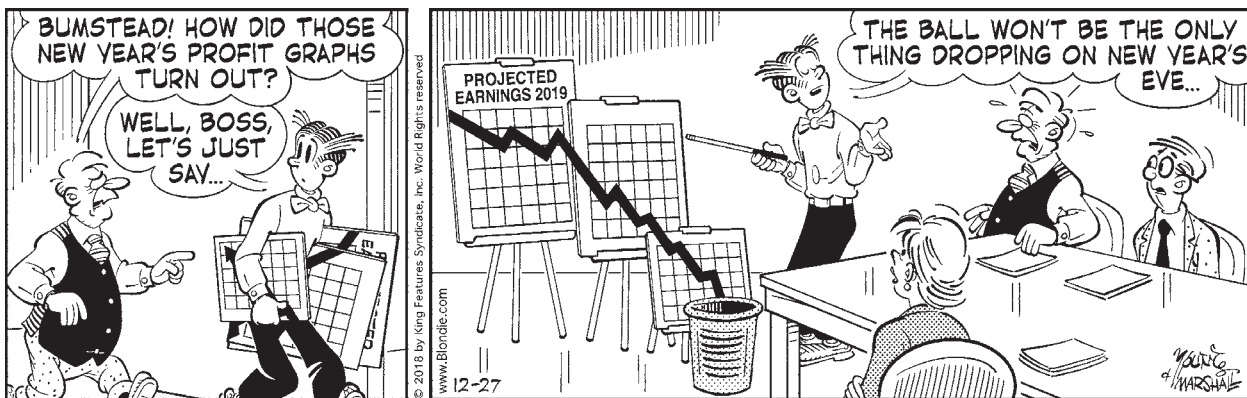
Mutts



6 Chix



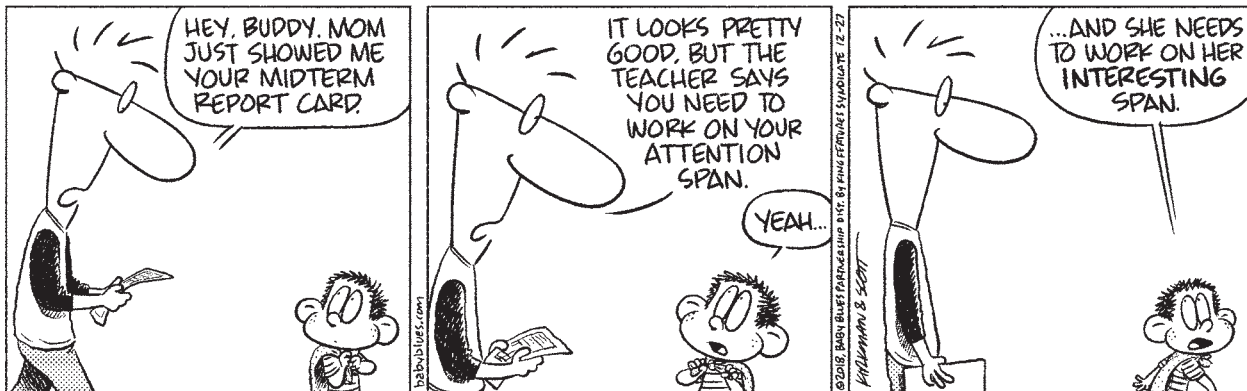
Blondie



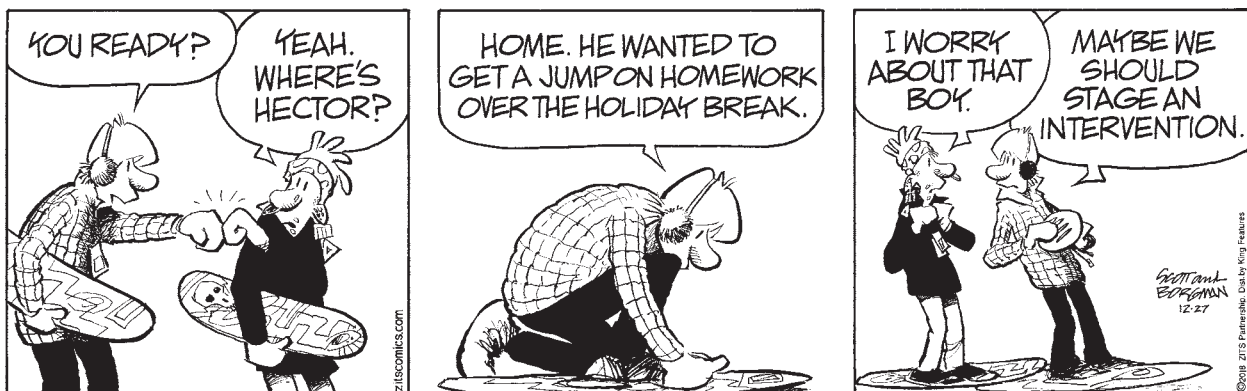
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

9	4				8			
1					2			
				3		8		
			3				7	1
		6				2		
5	9				4			
		7		1				
			7					8
			9				4	3

Difficulty Level ★★

12/27

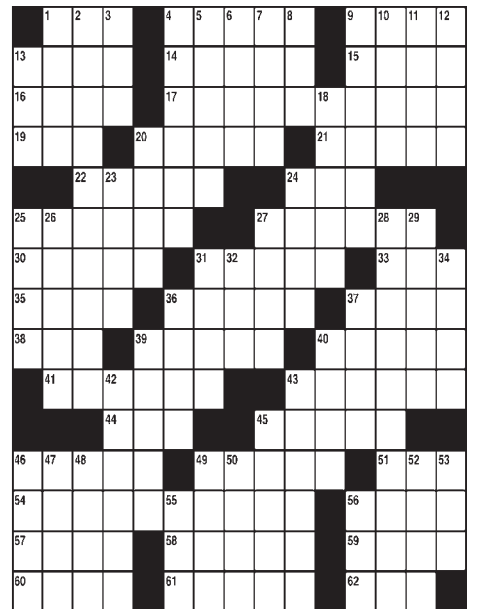
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

2	1	9	3	7	5	4	8	6
4	6	3	8	1	9	7	2	5
8	7	5	6	2	4	3	1	9
3	5	6	7	9	8	1	4	2
7	2	8	1	4	6	5	9	3
1	9	4	5	3	2	6	7	8
9	3	2	4	5	1	8	6	7
6	4	7	2	8	3	9	5	1
5	8	1	9	6	7	2	3	4

ACROSS

- Hot tub
- Stay away from
- Envelop
- In ... impoverished
- beans
- Frau's husband
- Franklin and Stiller
- Takes ... over; outweighs
- Ted Danson TV series
- Partially melted snow
- Nervous
- Dessert choices
- Pen name
- Excuses
- Most immaculate
- "For Whom the Bell ..."
- Highly seasoned
- Edison's monogram
- Acting part
- Tiny particle
- Treaty
- French friend
- Teasdale and Gilbert
- Orlando team
- "Make it ..."; "Hurry up!"
- End-to-end measurement
- City transport
- Silly as a ...
- Mistake
- "Turkey in the ..."
- Record speed letters
- Hairdresser
- Dishonest one
- Horse's home
- Tango or twist
- Overnight stops
- Drove too fast
- Web-footed mammal
- Fragile edible



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/27/18

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

RATS	SILT	SLOW
IVIES	TRIO	WANE
DINAH	RESIDENCE	
EDS	AHA	LOADED
ENVOY	SIT	
ASLEEP	POLYPS	
TOTED	BALMY	ELM
ODOR	ROGUE	BRIE
PAW	SITES	RACED
SNATCH	MINORS	
BAH	NAVEL	
IMPALA	EYE	ARC
REITERATE	ROTOR	
KNEE	DIED	SLOPE
SUDS	SLAY	DREW

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12/27/18

DOWN

- Observes
- Most widely used antibiotic
- Commercials

- Red, green & yellow fruits
- Flu cause
- Individuals
- Dry skin symptom
- Female animal
- From what place
- Monthly expense
- Circle portions
- Hunted animal
- CBS competitor
- Grocery store section
- Enjoys a winter sport
- Up to the task
- Dollar bill
- Gillette razor model
- Weaving devices
- Photos, for short
- Walking unsteadily
- Implied, though not spoken
- Agile
- Split ... soup
- Engrave
- Gullible fools

- Gather crops
- Unusual
- "Beat it!"
- Color slightly
- Brief spasm of pain
- Sra. or Mme.
- Marriage words
- Whopper

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Biulding C 17 weeks remain \$6500

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Japan to resume commercial whaling, but not in Antarctic

By **MARI YAMAGUCHI**

Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan announced Wednesday that it is leaving the International Whaling Commission to resume commercial hunts for the animals for the first time in 30 years, but said it would no longer go to the Antarctic for its much-criticized annual killings.

Japan switched to what it calls research whaling after the IWC imposed a moratorium on commercial whaling in the 1980s, and now says stocks have recovered enough to resume commercial hunts.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said Japan would resume commercial whaling in July "in line with Japan's basic policy of promoting sustainable use of aquatic living resources based on scientific evidence."

He added that Japan is disappointed that the IWC — which he said is dominated by conservationists — focuses on the protection of whale stocks even though the commission has a treaty mandate for both whale conservation and the development of the whaling industry.

"Regrettably, we have reached a decision that it is impossible in the IWC to seek the coexistence of states with different views," he said at a news conference.

Suga said the commercial hunts would be limited to Japan's territorial waters and its 200-mile (323-kilometer) exclusive economic zone along its coasts. He said Japan would stop its annual whaling expeditions to the Antarctic and northwest Pacific oceans. Non-signatory states are not allowed to do so, according to Japanese Fish-



In this September, 2017, photo, a minke whale is unloaded at a port after a whaling for scientific purposes in Kushiro, in the northernmost main island of Hokkaido.

eries Agency officials.

The IWC imposed the moratorium on commercial whaling three decades ago due to a dwindling whale population. In 1987, Japan switched to what is called research whaling, but the program has been criticized as a cover for commercial hunting since the meat is sold on the market at home.

Japanese officials said Japan, even after leaving the whaling convention, will remain as an observer to the IWC and plans to continue participating in the group's scientific meetings and annual conferences.

The environmental group Greenpeace condemned Wednesday's announcement and disputed Japan's view that whale stocks have recovered, and noted that ocean life is being threatened by pollution as well as overfishing. "The declaration today is out of step with the international community, let alone the protection needed to safeguard the future of our oceans and these majes-

tic creatures," Sam Annesley, executive director of Greenpeace Japan, said in a statement. "The government of Japan must urgently act to conserve marine ecosystems, rather than resume commercial whaling."

Australia's government, often a vocal critic of Japan's whaling policies, said in a statement that it was "extremely disappointed" with Japan's decision to

quit the commission.

However, New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters joined Australia in welcoming Japan's withdrawal from the southern ocean. Japan was the only country with an ambition to return to commercial whaling in the Antarctic Ocean. Japanese Fisheries Agency official and longtime IWC negotiator Hideki Moronuki said Japan would use the IWC's method to carefully determine a catch quota on the basis of science, but declined to give an estimate. He said Japan plans to use seven existing whaling hubs on the Pacific coast for the upcoming commercial hunts.

Moronuki said Japan is starting with a modest plan because it has to figure out if or how commercial whaling can be a viable industry. "What's most important is to have a diverse and stable food supply," he said.

The Fisheries Agency said Japan plans to catch three kinds of whale that are believed to have sufficient stocks — minke, sei and Bryde's. Japan has hunted whales for centuries, but

has reduced its catch following international protests and declining demand for whale meat at home. The withdrawal from the IWC may be a face-saving step to stop Japan's ambitious Antarctic hunts and scale down the scope of whaling to around the Japanese coasts.

Japan slashed its annual quota in the Antarctic by about one third after the International Court of Justice ruled in 2014 that the country's research whaling program wasn't as scientific as it had argued. Japan currently hunts about 600 whales annually in the Antarctic and the Northern Pacific.

Fisheries officials have said Japan annually consumes thousands of tons of whale meat from the research hunts, mainly by older Japanese seeking a nostalgic meal. It's a fraction of the country's whale meat supply of about 200,000 tons before the IWC moratorium. Critics say they doubt commercial whaling can be a sustainable industry because younger Japanese may not view the animals as food. □

Russia: Hole drilled from inside Int'l Space Station capsule



In this Wednesday, June 6, 2018 file photo, Russian cosmonaut Sergey Prokopyev, crew member of the mission to the International Space Station, ISS, waves as he boards the spaceship prior to the launch at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan.

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — A Russian cosmonaut who explored a mysterious hole in a capsule docked to the Interna-

tional Space Station said Monday that the opening was drilled from inside the spacecraft and Russian law

enforcement agencies are investigating what caused it. Sergey Prokopyev said investigators were looking at samples he and crewmate Oleg Kononenko collected during a Dec. 12 spacewalk. Prokopyev and two other astronauts returned to Earth last week from a 197-day space station mission. The hole in the Russian Soyuz spacecraft attached to the station was spotted on Aug. 30. The crew discovered a leak that was creating a slight loss of pressure and plugged the hole with epoxy and gauze. Prokopyev said at a news conference the cavity started from the capsule's interior and "it's up to the investigative organs when that hole was made." □



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At new Museum of Black Civilizations, a call to come home

By AMELIA NIERENBERG

Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) —

The Museum of Black Civilizations in Senegal opened this month amid a global conversation about the ownership and legacy of African art. The West African nation's culture minister isn't shy: He wants the thousands of pieces of cherished heritage taken from the continent over the centuries to come home.

"It's entirely logical that Africans should get back their artworks," Abdou Latif Coulibaly told The Associated Press. "These works were taken in conditions that were perhaps legitimate at the time but illegitimate today." Last month, a report commissioned by French President Emmanuel Macron recommended that French museums give back works taken without consent, if African countries request them. Macron has stressed the "undeniable crimes of European colonization," adding that "I cannot accept that a large part of African heritage is in France."

The new museum in Dakar is the latest sign that welcoming spaces across the continent are being prepared. The museum, with its focus on Africa and the diaspora, is decades in the making. The idea was conceived when Senegal's first president, internationally acclaimed poet Leopold Sedar Senghor, hosted the



In this photo taken Thursday, Dec. 6, 2018, an installation by Haitian artist Philippe Dodard's "La Movement en Memoire," stands like a ship inside a gallery of contemporary African art and contemporary art during the inauguration in Dakar, Senegal.

World Black Festival of Arts in 1966.

At the museum's vibrant opening, sculptors from Los Angeles, singers from Cameroon and professors from Europe and the Americas came to celebrate, some in tears. "This moment is historic," Senegalese President Macky Sall said. "It is part of the continuity of history." Perhaps reflecting the tenuous hold that African nations still have on their own legacy objects, the museum will not have a permanent collection. Filling the 148,000-square-foot circular structure, one of the largest of its kind on the continent, is complicated

by the fact that countless artifacts have been dispersed around the world.

Both the inaugural exhibition, "African Civilizations: Continuous Creation of Humanity," and the museum's curator take a far longer view than the recent centuries of colonization and turmoil. Current works highlight the continent as the "cradle of civilization" and the echoes found among millions of people in the diaspora today.

"Colonization? That's just two centuries," curator Hamady Bocoum told the AP, saying that proof of African civilization is at least 7,000 years old, referencing

a skull discovered in present-day Chad. Like others, Bocoum is eager to see artifacts return for good. The exhibition includes 50 pieces on loan from France, including more than a dozen from the Quai Branly museum in Paris. More than 5,000 pieces in the Quai Branly come from Senegal alone, Bocoum said.

"When we see the inventory of the Senegalese objects that are found in France, we're going to ask for certain of those objects," Bocoum said. "For the moment, we have not yet started negotiations." He brushed off concerns that African institutions

might be unable to care for their own heritage, pointing to the new museum's humidified, air-conditioned storage space.

The history of some of the objects in the opening exhibition is grim. Pointing to the saber of El Hadj Umar Tall, a 19th-century West African thinker who fought against French colonialism, Bocoum described how French troops fighting him stripped local women of their elaborate jewelry by cutting off their ears.

Contemporary works in the exhibition touch on both triumph and tragedy. There are black-and-white photographs of African nightclubs in the 1960s shot by famous Malian photographer Malick Sidibe, and a stark mural by Haitian artist Philippe Dodard depicting African religions and the middle passage. Works by Yrneh Gabon Brown, based in Los Angeles, reference slavery and contemporary race relations in America.

"Sometimes I feel like a motherless child," Brown told the AP. "And here, as a member of Africa's English-speaking diaspora, I am proud, reaffirmed."

France, whose president in recent weeks has pledged to return 26 pieces to Benin, is just one of many countries loaning works for the new museum's opening exhibition. Bocoum now is working with dozens of institutions around the world to plan future exhibits. □

Art historian Sister Wendy Beckett has died. She was 88

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) —

Sister Wendy Beckett, an art historian and critic who rose to prominence on TV late in life, has died. She was 88. The Carmelite Monastery of Quidenham said Beckett died at the monastery Wednesday afternoon.

She was a sister of the Catholic Church who became prominent in the 1990s presenting BBC shows about art history.

Her work included a series of well received documen-



In this Thursday, Sept. 4, 1997 file photo, Sister Wendy Beckett, a Roman Catholic nun of the Sisters of Notre Dame, who lives in Colinton, England, and is a well-known art critic, stands near an unidentified sarcophagus at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston.

Associated Press

taries including "Sister Wendy's Odyssey" and "Sister Wendy's Grand Tour."

The BBC said it commissioned Beckett in 1991 to host a TV documentary on the National Gallery in London. She stood in front of the paintings dressed in a black nun's habit and discussed the paintings without a script or teleprompter.

"Sister Wendy had a unique presentation style, a deep knowledge of and passion for the arts," BBC director

of arts Jonty Claypole said. "She was a hugely popular BBC presenter and will be fondly remembered by us all."

Close friend Xinran Xue said Beckett's death was "a huge loss for the art world. She was a brilliant art critic." Beckett was born in South Africa and raised in Scotland. She joined a convent at 16 and started studying fine art in the 1980s.

She taught in Cape Town, South Africa, and Liverpool in northern England. □

Laurel and Hardy movie 'Stan & Ollie' is a joy

By **LINDSEY BAHR**
Associated Press

There are lot of movies in theaters right now trying to grab your attention, and dollars, from big superhero spectacles and musical extravaganzas to awards darlings and wannabes. It's easy to get overwhelmed with the options in the multiplex (and, frankly, at home) and when something like, say, a late-career Laurel and Hardy biopic comes along, you'd be forgiven for thinking it easy to dismiss, or at least put off for a little while. But I'm here to tell you not to sleep on "Stan & Ollie." It is simply terrific — an understated but smartly told crowd-pleaser about the legendary comedy duo in their last act, with wonderful production value, a sharp and surprisingly poignant script and brilliant performances from John C. Reilly, as Oliver Hardy, and Steve Coogan, as Stan Laurel.

Directed by Jon S. Baird ("Filth") off a script from Jeff Pope ("Philomena"), "Stan & Ollie" focuses in on the



This image released by Sony Pictures Classics show John C. Reilly as Oliver Hardy in a scene from "Stan & Ollie."

two during a last-gasp musical hall tour of the United Kingdom in 1953, 16 years after their prime, when most of the world had assumed the two had long-since retired on the riches of their fame.

There is a brief introduction of them at their peak working with Hal Roach (played

by Danny Huston). They're laughing about ex-wives and money and declaring that they'll never get married again, or, as Laurel says, he's just going to find a woman he doesn't like and buy her a house. But there's a sign of trouble to come. Laurel's contract with Roach is up, and he's taking a meeting at another studio, expecting (and

hoping) that Hardy will come along.

The film comes back to this pivotal break through-out, as we learn more and more about that rift and their lingering issues with one another and the seams of this showbiz-manufactured marriage start to show even as this performance tour gets more and more trying as it becomes

evident that this is their last act. It's a rough go on the road at first, as they try to keep their spirits up even when performing to a half-full, second-rate theater (a lousy promoter has not done a good job educating the public that they're not retired).

Eventually they have to lower themselves to do a series of cheesy promos educating the public that yes, it is them and not some impersonators, which ends up working. Abbott and Costello might have been the big screen comedy duo of the moment, but it turns out there was still an audience for nostalgia.

And there is more at stake than just their ego — Laurel has been hard at work on a Robin Hood movie that he hopes could be their big comeback (a producer is supposed to come see their London show), while Hardy is trying to mask his declining health. "Stan & Ollie" packs a surprising emotional punch as well, without ever delving into the sad clown sentimentality that you might expect from a standard performer biopic. □

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Hold up, Beyonce did not release new music

By **MESFIN FEKADU**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — There's no more juice in Beyonce's lemonade jar: The singer did not release new music though two albums featuring old Beyonce songs hit streaming services Thursday.

Under the name Queen Carter, the albums "Have Your Way" and "Back Up, Rewind" appeared on Spotify and Apple Music, featuring demos, previously released songs and unreleased tracks by Beyonce. Hours later, they were removed.

The 10-track "Have Your Way" included songs like "After All Is Said and Done," Beyonce's duet with Marc Nelson from the "Best Man" soundtrack, released in 1999; "Hollywood," a song with Jay-Z from his 2006 al-



In this Aug. 28, 2016 file photo, Beyonce Knowles arrives at the MTV Video Music Awards at Madison Square Garden, in New York.

Associated Press

bum, "Kingdom Come"; and "Hey Goldmember" from the soundtrack for 2002's "Austin Powers in Goldmember," which starred Beyonce. It also featured "Crazy Feelings," the singer's collaboration with Missy Elliott from

the rapper's sophomore album, 1999's "Da Real World"; and "Fever," a cover of the '50's hit used in an ad for Beyonce's perfume and for the soundtrack for "The Fighting Temptations," another film Beyonce appeared in. □

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Bad Bunny surprises fans for Christmas with first album

By BERENICE BAUTISTA

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Bad Bunny has a very special Christmas present for his fans: "X 100PRE," his first album with 13 new songs, including his new single "Solo De Mi."

"For every artist is a dream to release an album and that people listen to it," the Puerto Rican star said in a recent phone interview from a hotel in San Juan, Puerto Rico, while enjoying the pool.

"I think I've already released many singles, there are many songs by the rabbit out there, but I think that as an artist it was time to do a full album," he said, speaking in Spanish.

This year Bad Bunny dominated the Latin music charts with hits like "MIA" with Drake, "El Baño" with Enrique Iglesias, "Amorfo-da" and "I Like It", a song recorded with Cardi B and J Balvin that's nominated in



In this Nov. 15, 2018 file photo, Bad Bunny arrives at the Latin Grammy Awards at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. Associated Press

the Grammys in the Record of the Year category. For "X 100PRE" Bad Bunny spent the last six months in the studio creating new trap and reggaeton fusions with pop, dance, rock and even disco for titles such as the pop-rock "Tenemos Que Hablar," the electro-

dance "Otra Noche En Miami" and the bachata-touched "La Romana". The album also includes the previously released singles "MIA" and "Estamos Bien." Bad Bunny wants to make people dance, but he also makes space for romance and heartache in songs like

"Como Antes," the track he says was the hardest to produce.

"It was the last song that we finished and the first that we recorded," he said.

"The album has something for everybody; it has romantic songs, songs for dancing, songs for the street, songs for the club and songs to reflect on." Beside Drake in "MIA," he invited Diplo for "200 MPH" and the Dominican urban singer El Alfa for "La Romana." As a bonus: listen for Ricky Martin's voice in the chorus of "Caro".

Bad Bunny tends to include swear words from different Latin American countries in his lyrics, and some can be heard in "X 100PRE" in songs like "¿Quien Tu Eres?" and "Cuando Perriabas." "I tried to make it as clean as possible," he said laughing.

For now he wants people to see that he is able to create many styles of mu-

sic. He said he was pleased with the Grammy nomination for "I Like It" but that he's more concerned with the reaction of fans to his music.

"It obviously makes me happy and cheerful, but to be honest, I didn't get very excited when I found out... I sincerely don't work thinking about nominations or awards or money," he said. "I care about people liking my songs and singing them along in my concerts. Those are the things that thrill me."

A day before releasing his album, the singer, whose real name is Benito Antonio Martinez Ocasio, was distributing 30,000 gifts for Puerto Rican children through his Foundation Good Bunny, including musical instruments and balls. His own wish for this Christmas:

"That people enjoy my album and my songs. That's all I want." □

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